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QUEEN'S FOLLY.

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CHAPTER VII.

GAINING A FOOTING.

RACHEL had won the cause, but she had still to pay the costs, she had still to make good her footing in the schoolroom. She had Ann on her mind and heavy on her mind, and a Black Monday in prospect ; and she had less faith in Lady Ellingham's support than she could wish. She longed for the trial of strength to be over, and much would it have surprised her had she been told that within forty-eight hours she would be feeling, if not reconciled to her lot, at any rate in a mood to snatch a passing enjoyment and to think it possible that she might find pleasure in her new life.

Yet so it was, and the change came about very simply. Towards three on the next afternoon the boy blundered in on her studies. 'I'm to ask,' he blurted out, bashfully kicking one foot against the other, 'if you'd care to come with us to the Stag's Hole ? We're to boil the kettle there. Mr. Girardot is coming.'

Rachel guessed to whom she owed the attention. But she saw that here was a chance, more gracious than the schoolroom afforded, of coming to terms with her pupil, and she gladly embraced the invitation.

'Then in twenty minutes ! ' the boy cried, and whooped himself away.

So half an hour later she found herself marching into the forest with the tutor and the two children, the latter riding a pony by turns and squabbling much over it. The treat was unexpected, the scene was new to her, the sun shone, the woodland depths invited ; and presently she was surprised to find herself at her ease. 'In the season,' the tutor explained, 'we do this once a week. Sometimes Lady Ellingham comes. She loves a *fête-champêtre*, and the simpler it is the more it is to her taste. Oh, you are not

so much to be pitied, ma'am, as you think ! In twelve months I predict——'

'If I am here,' she said.

'No, no ! No Jeremiads to-day, if you please ! ' he cried gaily. 'I repeat that twelve months hence you will know every turn of this path and love it. You will be tied to the forest by every tendril of a heart that I am sure is open to the influence of beauty and solitude ! You will mark with a white stone many a bank and resting place now strange to you, and harbour memories and tender memories of more than one. I see it ! I know it ! You will be a forest lover, ma'am ! ' He flourished the basket that he carried.

Rachel shook her head. 'I am not so sanguine,' she said, and she would fain have been insensible to the thrill that his words and his tone awoke in her. But how could she resist the charm of the woodland that took her to its bosom, of the stately oaks, their feet clothed in bracken, or the dark beech-wood, so silent that the fall of the mast surprised the ear and the flight of a wood-dove startled the nerves ? Or the green feathery bottom where a runlet tinkled unseen, and again sparkled in the sunshine ? Or, if she were proof against these and against the holiday spirit that won insensibly upon her, how was she to resist the tones that caressed her, that hinted interest, that avowed good-will, that claimed to share alike her confidence and her fears ? Rachel had been more than woman if she had not in some degree succumbed to the charm, even though Ann's black brows and repellent glances cried a warning.

'You are not so sanguine ?' he said, after a pause given, it seemed, to reflection. 'Why ? But it is idle to ask. I know. You do not deceive me. Lady Ellingham's manner has chilled you. But what of it ? She is Lady Ellingham, we are we, we bear the badge of servitude that Swift bore. Then let it unite us. We are of a kind, we owe one another what sympathy, what aid, what comfort is in our power. Yesterday, I am proud to avow it, I did and said what lay in my way. And you are here, and are not—do not say that you are—unhappy to be here ? Good ! Then to-morrow it may lie with you to do the same kind office for me, and I know you too well—oh, I know you, I understand you. I have measured your loyal soul too exactly not to be sure that you in your turn——'

But here the children broke in, claiming an arbiter, protesting, appealing, wrangling. They fell to beating one another, and the fray was only closed by Girardot's seizing the girl, mastering her and dragging her on, half reluctant, half willing, her arm prisoned

in his. Possibly he was not sorry to give the governess a proof of his power, where she felt herself so impotent ; for he proceeded to tease Ann, to provoke and subdue the child by turns. And Rachel, who had shrunk from interposing, feeling herself unequal to the task, was not critical enough to discern that his authority was limited by the child's humour, and went no farther than flattered her. Ann too was showing off.

In a dingle with steep wooded sides and on a grassy plat, half encircled by a brook rippling clear and sharp over brown pebbles, they piled their wood beside a fallen trunk, lit it delicately with flint and steel and dry tinder, and set their kettle to boil. The children helped or hindered or strayed down the rivulet, turning stones for loaches. To Rachel the scene brought a sense of relief, of peace unexpected and unlooked for. The ease and freedom of the meal beside the stream pleased, and the boy made shy advances to her. But her main difficulty remained, for she perceived that but for the tutor's watchful attentions, and his care to include her, she would have had but cold entertainment ; and that Ann at any rate would have sent her to Coventry. Was it wonderful if she felt, and if now and again a shy glance betrayed, her gratitude ? If, as they loitered homewards through an evening stillness inviting to reverie, or if, once more alone in her schoolroom, life seemed to take on a warmer hue ?

And if rising in the morning she felt in place of dread the tingle of anticipation and conjectured in the coming day possibilities that she did not stay to analyse ? No odd moment at which he might not appear ! Now with a gentle 'I ventured to bring you—but I see I am interrupting you,' now with a brisker 'Ha ! ha ! I see we wear our stand-off air to-day ! We are proud, we are not to be trespassed on !' He brought her franks and she might now write to the Cottage without thought of the cost. And by and by he brought her a more startling surprise. He, or curiosity, or possibly ennui—but Rachel gave him the credit. For early in the afternoon two days later who should appear to break in on the governess's solitude but my lady.

She nodded negligently to Rachel, who rose and curtsied in confusion. She walked with studied calmness to the window and gazed out. ' You look to this side ? ' she said. ' It is not the brighter side. Have you,' she continued, evidently for the sake of saying something, ' all the books you need ? All that you want ? ' And when Rachel explained that she had made a list, ' Very good, Miss South, let Mr. Girardot have it. He will see to it.'

The girl, fingering her pen, continued to stand. 'Pray go on with whatever you are doing,' the Countess said, graciously inclining her head; and she turned to inspect the old foxed prints that adorned the wall. A tarnished mirror hung among them. Before this she lingered, and had Rachel been at her ease the girl would have seen that she was herself the real object under inspection—a cold inspection that omitted no detail of face or figure. Presently, to Rachel's relief—for she found the silence both trying and ambiguous—her visitor moved towards the table. 'You find the change excessive?' she said more gently.

'I have been used to a quiet life, ma'am.'

'And you are content?'

'I shall be more than content if—if I am successful with my pupil.'

'And that is your only anxiety?'

'I think so.'

Lady Ellingham nodded. She turned again to the door. 'Well, I hope that Ann will take to you. Perhaps not at once, but—'

The thud of a closing door stayed the words. A quick step outside, a hasty knock and the tutor entered, his face radiant. He clapped his hands. 'Caught on the place, dear lady!' he cried. 'The penalty is old, known, established! And Miss South will join with me, I am sure, in enforcing it, and humbly crave the honour of your presence at the schoolroom tea.'

But Lady Ellingham made it plain that she was not prepared for this. 'Not to-day, Mr. Girardot,' she said soberly.

The words went by him as if she had not spoken. 'Which,' he continued with an exaggerated bow, 'is even now mounting the stairs.'

'No,' my lady repeated and this time more coldly. 'Not to-day, if you please.' She signed to him to open the door.

Rachel thought that that must end the matter, and felt that she was the obstacle. But she did not yet know the tutor, much less did she expect to hear her thought put into words. Instead of giving place, he stepped forward and with a smiling face he set his back to the door. 'No, ma'am, not so!' he said. 'I cannot let you, I cannot suffer you to belie your kind heart. You have not considered, I know that you have not considered that to refuse to do this to-day—to refuse to grant a favour that you have so often granted before, is to—'

'Really, Mr. Girardot,' the Countess broke in, colouring with annoyance, 'I do not understand what you mean.'

' You do not know that to refuse to-day is to'— he dropped his voice to a tone of confidence—' is to hurt the sensibilities of one who still feels herself a little homeless, a little strange, ma'am ? Ah, no, I know you too well. I know that you have not considered that, or—'

' You are too absurd ! ' Lady Ellingham cried warmly. ' You must let me pass, if you please ! '

But he still persisted. ' No ! ' he said, and to Rachel's surprise, who watched the scene with profound astonishment, he held the door, though my lady put her hand on it. ' No, I appeal to the kindness of your heart ! I know you, ma'am, to be generous, amiable, that you would not hurt a fly ! And that rather than hurt one who—but ah ! Here come more powerful intercessors ! They may succeed where I fail ! '

And with a submissive gesture he opened the door and admitted the children, who flung themselves upon their mother with cries of glee. ' You will stay, mother, won't you ? ' they pleaded. ' You will stay ? Mr. Girardot promised us that you would ! '

' I think Mr. Girardot,' the Countess said, with a reproachful glance, ' takes too much upon himself. I am to have no will of my own, it seems ! Still as you——'

' You will, won't you ? Say yes ! ' they cried, hugging her.

She gave way. ' I suppose I must,' she said.

' Children,' he cried briskly, ' clear the table ! Room, room for the Sunday pound cake ! It comes ! It comes ! '

And within three minutes Rachel, dumbfounded by the audacity of this strange man, found herself seated at the table with the great lady. She found that she was even expected to preside and to pour out—with nervous hands and a flushed face. Fortunately the jests and horse-play of the children, who never rested in their seats for a moment, robbed the meal of formality, and though Lady Ellingham rarely addressed her, and might almost have been suspected of shyness, and Lady Ann turned a cold and repelling shoulder, the ice was broken and a step, a perceptible step, was gained. The once dull room rang with shrieks and laughter, and if she was not of it, she sat amidst it—admiring.

And when, left again to herself, she was free to think of what had passed, of what did she think ? Inevitably of the actor who had played so strange a rôle in the scene and dominated it—of his audacity, his mastery, his cleverness. Equally impossible was it for her not to reflect with a thrill of gratitude on the purpose to which he had devoted his powers. To helping her, lonely and

insignificant as she was, to winning a footing for her, to making things a little easier for her !

And—and to think in such a case, to think long and gratefully was coming near to—but Rachel was not as yet awake to that. If she was tending in a certain direction she did not perceive whither she was tending ; nor understand why, when they were gone, she sat for minutes, lost in a pleasant dream, why the future seemed to be more full of interest, of life, of possibilities, than it had seemed an hour or two before. She had come to Queen's Folly vowed to a cloistered life, into which certain things did not enter, or at any rate were not supposed to enter ; and she did not yet discern that even a governess's close bonnet is not proof against nature, an elf that has a way of stealing in by the keyhole, be the door ever so strongly barred.

But she suspected where credit was due when Black Monday arrived, and the dreaded hour of ten came, and passed without open disaster. Lady Ann came sulkily in, sat lumpily down at the table, and scowled at her governess from under black brows, that said as plainly as if she had spoken, 'I shan't learn from you !' But she did not openly rebel, did not put out her tongue at her teacher, was not utterly dumb when addressed. Rachel felt, indeed, as if she were dealing with a barrel of gunpowder, and every question that she put were a spark. But she hid her fears, like the gallant little soul that she was, did nine-tenths of the work herself, and turned a blind eye to shrugs and grimaces. She looked to use and wont to help her, hoped by sheer gentleness to appeal to the good that was in the child—if good there was—and in the meantime she was content to get through the morning without an outburst.

Somewhat emboldened she ventured on the morrow to set a French copy and Ann showed herself unexpectedly compliant. She produced a packet of quills dyed all the colours of the rainbow and enclosed in a fancy box, and choosing one, fell pretty willingly to work, her pleasure in the gaudy pen reconciling her, it seemed, to the task.

So for some days things went tolerably, Rachel doing the greater part of the work and her pupil lolling and fidgeting. But on the Friday Ann came to the schoolroom in a black mood. It was a fine morning, the sun shone gaily, the air laden with the scents of the forest came in at the window, and the child rebelled. 'I shan't work to-day !' she said, scowling, and refusing to take her seat. 'So there !'

'Nonsense, Ann!' Rachel replied briskly. 'You will have the afternoon for play.'

'It will rain. Bowles says it will.'

'Well, we must take our chance of that.'

Ann lumped herself heavily on her chair. 'I shan't work anyway.'

Rachel summoned all her firmness though her heart beat unpleasantly. 'You must not say that,' she said. 'You will have a holiday to-morrow, and if you do not work to-day—'

'What'll you do?' defiantly.

'There will be no tea at the Stag's Brook to-morrow,' Rachel decided. She felt that she could no longer capitulate.

'Oh, there won't, won't there!' Ann cried, and bounced up from her seat. 'I'll see about that, you horrid thing! You white-faced thing!' And before Rachel could interpose the child had flung out of the room.

Rachel stood and looked at the door in dismay. What could she do with such a pupil? So wilful, so stubborn, so rude? She could only go to Lady Ellingham and ask for support, and she felt that to resort to her at this early stage was to own defeat, and to confess that she was unequal to the task. She could have cried. But there seemed to be nothing else for it, and with a sinking heart she was preparing to seek the Countess when she heard lagging steps returning. Ann sneaked in with a gloomy face, rubbing one leg against the other. She left the door open, and dumped herself down in her seat.

'Be good enough to close the door!' Rachel said in her coldest tone.

To her surprise the child obeyed.

'I am glad,' Rachel continued, looking at her with all the severity that she could assume, 'that you have thought better of it, Lady Ann. I should certainly have kept my word.'

'I don't care,' sullenly. 'I don't care whether we go to Stag's Brook or no! But I—I promised him when he gave me the pens—that's all!'

'Well, I am glad that you have one virtue—you keep your word. So it was the pens, was it?' Rachel went on in a cutting tone, but she felt her face flame. 'Then you had better take that one out of your mouth and begin your French dictation. But understand, Ann, that it is a matter of no moment to me whether you like me or not. I may not like you; but it is my duty to teach you and I intend to do so. Now we will begin.'

And it really seemed as if her words made some impression. Ann scowled, indeed, as if she could kill her governess, but she took the pen out of her mouth and wrote.

So that was the secret of the quills! They were his present. He had planned, schemed, and secured at least a beginning for her. Rachel's face was still warm. Ann could no longer have called her a white-faced thing. Her face was warm but her heart also swelled—with gratitude.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VEIL RENT.

DURING those first weeks nothing struck Rachel more than the stately loneliness in which they lived. She had pictured the splendour and bustle of a great establishment, the coming and going of guests, the hum of carriages, cards, laughter, the swish of silken trains on polished floors. But the long reception rooms at Queen's Folly lay day after day silent in sunshine, or faded into November gloom. The only train that swept them was my lady's as, proud and still, she sought the gardens, or of an afternoon passed out through bowing servants to her solitary drive with her four horses and her outrider. At long intervals a visitor appeared and now and again the children broke loose from their guardians, wrangled and clattered across the hall, slid shrieking down the broad balusters.

There were reasons why Queen's Folly saw little company. It was Lady Ellingham's pleasure. But to some extent it was the same with many great houses at that day. Travelling was fatiguing as well as costly, and guests, when they came, came in large parties and stayed for long periods. Between times, the Squire and his lady sat down day after day with some led captain or chaplain, who was cunning in wine and patient of old stories; or with some mature spinster, who of mornings grounded the lady's tambour-work and nursed her Raton.

Towards the end of November, however, Rachel, now pretty well established, felt a little stir in the house. She came on maids in strange places and saw doors ajar that were usually closed. And, 'Uncle George is coming,' Ann announced, sucking her pen defiantly. 'I shan't work while he is here.'

'He's bringing me a gun!' her brother bragged. 'I'm to shoot with him. I shall shoot all day.'

'It's only a boy's gun,' the girl cried jealously. 'It's not a real gun, silly.'

'It is!'

'It isn't!'

'You're a liar!' On which battle was joined and the fight rolled tumultuously out of the room, a whirl of arms and legs and shrill abuse. Rachel stopped her ears.

The news was nothing to her. The memory of Captain Dunstan was far from pleasant—a rude brusque man who had regarded her feelings no more than if she had been a kitchen-maid. But in the housekeeper's room, where a little break in the monotony was welcome, it provided a text on which Mrs. Jemmett had something to say.

'Now we shall see,' the housekeeper commented, her face thoughtful. 'The Captain has eyes as well as us. And it's my thinking he'll not like what he sees.'

'You're suspicious, suspicious, ma'am,' Bowles retorted. 'Do you think as I've stood twice a day behind her ladyship's chair and not know her?'

'Now, Bowles, did I say a word against her ladyship? Not that she's not a woman after all, and water wears away a stone. And some excuse in her case, poor lady, and I'd say that if I was dying! But it's him I'm thinking of.'

'Girardot? Well, you may take it from me,' with a chuckle, 'that he's otherwise employed, ma'am. If I saw my lady grow pink when he come into the room, and her ladyship's hand shake when he spoke sudden, and her ladyship look out of the window and sigh when he's not there, and her ladyship walk as if the gravel was springy moss under her feet when she started to Stag's Brook with him—if I see all that—'

Mrs. Jemmett's eyes glittered. 'But you don't see that, Bowles, do you?'

'No, ma'am, I don't! But I see all that—or it's reported to me by them as does—in another quarter.'

'Quick work, then!'

'She's young, ma'am, she's young. And he—well, you know what he is.'

'Poor thing!'

'Oh, she'll not be the first by a many,' rubbing his nose. 'And he's the looks, and he may mean it this time. So I don't know as she is so much to be pitied, Mrs. J.'

'Pooh! man.' The housekeeper was scornful. 'He's only

playing with her. I don't see so much of her ladyship as you do. But I've seen enough of him.'

'Well, I don't know. I'm not so certain sure, Mrs. J. It may have been as you say to begin, ma'am. But I'm not so sure now.'

'Then he's just a donkey between two bundles of hay,' Mrs. Jemmett retorted. 'And if I were sure, I declare I'd speak to her ladyship. It'd open her eyes anyway.'

'You'd lose the young woman her place that minute,' Bowles replied in alarm. 'Her ladyship's never got over the way the girl came. No, ma'am, nor ever been sure that what she thought at the first was wrong. She'd jump at the chance of getting rid of her.'

Mrs. Jemmett looked sharply at the butler. 'Well, I never, Bowles! I do believe you've a weakness for the wench yourself.'

Bowles preened himself. 'No, ma'am, no,' he said. 'My wishes as you know is otherwise placed, Mrs. J.'—with a languishing look at the housekeeper. 'I like some substance, ma'am. But my motto is "No interference!"'

'Well, you may be right,' Mrs. Jemmett admitted. 'But I do say that if her ladyship goes on sitting with him at every odd time right before the main door, the Captain will be blinder than I think him, if he don't take notice.'

'Then he'll show himself a deal less wise than my lord.'

'Ah, my man, a Blenheim's a good keeper, but it's only an apple after all!' Mrs. Jemmett rejoined, and though Bowles tried to provoke her to plainer speech it was in vain.

That Rachel, a player in the game, saw less than the onlookers was natural. She had prepared herself for a life from which certain feelings were supposed to be banished, and she took it for granted that they were banished. She had not taken the coif, indeed, and the world was still open to her. But to an extent, little less than if she had done so, she knew herself to be parted by her employment from the emotional side of a girl's life. The baize door that shut off the schoolroom was her grille, and her views and her tastes were supposed to lie within it. If she read 'Cecilia,' or 'The Sorrows of Werter,' it must be in private; in public she must revel in the flowery pages of 'Rasselas' and for her the world must consist of only one sex.

This presumption, and her inexperience, closed her eyes a little longer than might have been expected to the path that she was treading. There were moments when she wondered why, with

all her anxieties and with so much to depress her, she was content ; why, with the thunder-cloud of her pupil constantly hanging over her, and with a pretty clear notion that Lady Ellingham looked coldly on her, she felt the drawbacks of her position so little ; why, listening wakeful to the sough of the wind through the forest, and the cry of the screech-owl in the night, she had still only cheerful thoughts, and rising in the morning anticipated the day with an appetite for its chances. Something there was that added brilliance to the sunshine and a tender beauty to the evening ; that awoke in her a passionate love for the woodland, its winding paths and its green retreats. But what this was that thus lapped her in warmth and security, that lightened her heart and gave spring to her pulses, she was too inexperienced to inquire.

She only told herself, and with gratitude, that people were kind to her, that all went well with her, and that in no other position would she have been better placed or more happy. If she looked more often than was necessary in the tarnished mirror and tried more than one way of dressing her hair—well, she was a girl and young, and what was more natural ?

And then, on the day before that on which Captain Dunstan was expected, she met with a shock that in a single moment of time enlightened her. The matter was itself the merest trifle ; it was the effect which it had on her that drove the truth home. She was looking from her bedroom window, and she saw a thing that she had seen before. Down one of the avenues, walking slowly towards the house with the sunset behind them and the evening peace about them, came two persons ; my lady, slow, stately, languid, her companion graceful, animated, bending towards her in intimate talk, and now and again enforcing his words with a gesture. Rachel had seen the same thing more than once and without a thought or suspicion. Now it caused her a pang as swift, as sharp, as arresting, as if an arrow had pierced her breast—a pang that drove her from the window, to stand breathless in the middle of the floor, battling with a pain as new as was the knowledge it taught her.

She tried to reason, tried to reassure herself. But it was useless. She stood, breathing quickly, shaken to the depths of her being. She knew ! She knew at last, and she covered her conscious face with her hands. She knew the secret of her content, of the warmth that had lapped her, of the spell that had transfigured alike the woodland path and the daily toil.

The suspicion went for nothing. It fell harmless from the shield of her innocence—the conjuncture of the two meant nothing. But the veil that had masked her feelings from herself was rent, and rent beyond mending. She saw where she stood and what had happened to her during those weeks. Because he had been kind, because he had been of service to her, because he had thrown her a few kind words and teased her and drolled with her, because he had laughing eyes and curly hair and a slender shape—

She buried her hot face in her hands. She in her position ! And, oh, the folly of it, the shameful weakness of it, when he had never said a word, never looked a look—so she told herself—to encourage her. The fault lay all with her, and the weakness. And now—now all that remained to her was to conquer it ; to free her heart from this foolishness that had coiled itself about it, to shut her ears to the siren and her eyes to the sweet charm that had painted all things in colours so entrancing. She must be strong and, above all things, pride and self-respect required that she must be secret. She must bury her silliness as she might, hiding her weakness from every eye, and especially from his.

Above all, she must show the same face to him that she had ever shown. She must harden herself and accustom herself. But this was not so easy to do as to plan, and she was aware of that ; and it was an absent and taciturn Rachel who played her part next day, who saw Ann's mistakes one moment and forgot to correct them the next, who for minutes lost herself in a reverie, and once, to the child's angry surprise, rapped her sharply over the knuckles. A Rachel who, when Ann had left her, moved uneasily and restlessly about the room, unable to settle to anything.

And then the moment that she dreaded came.

She heard the baize door shriek, she heard his step in the passage and she took herself sternly in hand—was it not for this that she had been steeling herself all the morning ? He came in, smiling, debonair, flourishing an open pen-knife, in his gayest, maddest mood.

‘Pens ! Pens ! Bring out your pens !’ he cried. ‘Pens to mend !’ Then seeing that she was stooping over the table, apparently intent on putting things straight after the morning's work, he struck an attitude. ‘Now, there's the woman to the life ! All disorder she can mend ! And to her duties nice attend ! But when it comes unto a knife—then the man comes in !’

‘But really I am well supplied, Mr. Girardot,’ she said soberly. She was still busying herself about the table.

'Nonsense, ma'am, nonsense ! With such an imp to spoil them ? Impossible ! You cannot be !'

'Oh, she is growing better. Better than she was, I mean.' She ventured to look up and smile.

'But, dear lady, this will never do ! If there are no pens to mend, I shall be tempted to sever one of those little ringlets ! Those *boucles folâtres*, that have caught even the stubborn Ann in their meshes ! Come, come, the knife cuts empty air ! Which shall it be ?'

Twenty-four hours before Rachel would have accepted his badinage with a blush and a smile as Mr. Girardot's nonsense ; nor asked herself how far his laughing eyes and jesting words were winding themselves about her heart. To-day she was wiser, with a sad wisdom ! But she dared not check him too suddenly, or he might—oh, stinging thought—suspect. And as playfully as she could, 'Well, I am afraid you must drop the aspirate,' she said—cleverly as she thought—'and save the steel, Mr. Girardot.'

But she was not clever enough. He caught the new note in her voice. 'And save the steel ?' he repeated slowly. 'I see. But—is something the matter, ma'am ?'

She looked at him, innocently enough. 'The matter ? No, Mr. Girardot. Why ?'

'Well, methinks,' he answered with a whimsical look, 'there is a little too much of "Mr. Girardot" this morning ! Have we offended ? Have we trespassed ? Or has Ann been troublesome ? Or is it,' he continued with a droll look, 'that the virtue of the pens that I am not permitted to mend—is wearing out ?'

'I know how good you have been,' she said. But she could not put heart into her words, or speak as she would have spoken the day before.

And he saw it of course. 'Have been ?' He raised his eyebrows. 'And why not, ma'am, "how good you are" ? Is that too because the virtue of the pens is wearing out ? And we are no longer on probation, but are established, settled, able to stand on our own little feet ? And need no farther help, eh ? I see,' he added slowly, 'I see.'

That hurt Rachel and she coloured. 'But you don't see,' she said. 'It is not that.'

'But I fear it is that. Poor little knife !' addressing it. 'You are no longer of use, no longer wanted ! There are no more knots to cut ! No more tangles to sever ! Henceforth you are of use only to—cut our friends.'

Oh, he was too much for her ! She turned to the bookshelf to hide the tears that welled up in her eyes. 'Please don't say that,' she begged, and, alas, the traitorous tears were in her voice also. 'You know it is not that.'

He seized on the admission. 'Then what is it ?'

The imminence of the danger restored her self-control. She had thought that without betraying herself she might place their relations on a new footing, and by a reserve too measured to be noticed set him at a distance. But he had in a moment pierced her defences ; in another moment he might force her to avow that they were too—too intimate ; and she would rather die than betray herself in that way. In such a strait women can compass much, and, desperate, Rachel turned to him, she even smiled at him. 'Well, if you must know,' she confessed, 'Ann has been troublesome this morning, and I lost my temper. And I slapped her. And I am vexed with myself.'

'And how,' he inquired with genuine curiosity, 'did my Lady Ann take it ? She did not slap you back ?'

'No. Astonishingly well. And made me the more ashamed of myself.'

It was surprising how singularly the brightness of her eyes, which were still moist, and a kind of shyness that he had not seen in her of late, became her. 'Poor little girl !' he said, and he drew a step nearer. 'You are upset I see. Shall I feel your pulse—and prescribe for you ?'

But Rachel knew that if he touched her she would burst into tears, and she drew back. 'Thank you, I have my own prescription,' she said.

'And that is ?'

If only he would take his eyes, his keen, humorous, dominating eyes off her ! 'Solitude and sewing,' she replied, as lightly as she could. 'They are to a woman what wine, I suppose, is to a man.'

'But we only prescribe wine in serious cases,' he answered, considering her. 'And solitude ? By that I suppose you wish me gone ?'

'I have had Ann all the morning.' She let her weariness appear.

'Poor girl ! Poor little thing ! Well, I obey. But—if you shut yourself up whenever Ann is naughty, heaven help your friends ! I conclude,' with a searching glance, 'that I still am—that I count as a friend ?'

'Of course !' she said. But the question pressed her home and the tell-tale blood rose to her cheeks.

He nodded. 'Ah !' And he said no more. He went out slowly, and she was left to doubt, and alas, gravely to doubt, if she had deceived him. But to think, even to suspect that she had not, and that he had seen through her coldness and understood its motive, was terrible. She told herself that she was very unhappy—and a week, only a week before how happy she had been, how blest in her ignorance !

Saturday, the last day of November, fell two days later, and was warm for the season. But, mild as it was, an al fresco tea was out of the question, and Rachel was thankful for this. She was spared his company in circumstances that would have awakened every fond recollection and every moving sentiment. But although there could be no tea, Ann was bent on going to Stag's Hole, and Rachel was forced to accompany her, though the sunshine, that pierced the half-leafless trees and shot the mossy banks with jewels, no longer held any brightness for her, nor the long vistas of gleaming beech-trunks any loveliness. Still she was free to think her own thoughts and feed her melancholy ; and, arrived at the spot, while Lady Ann strayed here and there about her ploys, Rachel, seated on a fallen trunk, gave way to dreams, so immersed in the internal battle that she was fighting, that the squirrel cracking beech-mast in the branches behind her, sat and watched her with fearless eyes.

If only she might never see him again ! That was beginning to be her cry. If by one sharp wrench, one savage operation she might free herself from the cruel noose that was winding itself about her heart and slowly compressing it. Yet, if she did not see him again ! If all the world turned colourless and cold, and only east winds blew and clouds hung ever grey between her and the sun ! Poor girl, it was a long and sad road that her thoughts travelled that afternoon ; a road harder than she had thought to travel. But all things end and at length with a jerk she came back to the present—the present that chimed in strangely with her sad fancies. For the sky had grown overcast, the wind cold, the outlook grey. The sun had set. It was late, far later in the day than she had supposed.

Alarmed, she looked about her for Ann. Where was she ? 'Lady Ann !' she cried anxiously. 'Ann ! Where are you ?'

Ann was not far off and, of course, was in mischief. She had doffed her shoes and stockings and was paddling in the brook,

November though it was. Her hardy little legs showed raw-red through the clear water, and well aware that she had stolen a march on her companion, she was wantonly set on pushing her advantage to the utmost. Instead of coming out when bidden, she moved over to the other side of the brook. 'No hurry!' she said, without looking up. 'I'll come out in a minute!'

'You should never have gone in!' Rachel replied angrily, aware that she was herself in fault.

But Ann was equally aware of that, and rejoiced in an iniquity which her governess shared. 'Well, you never told me not to!' she retorted.

'And here is your bracelet on the bank!'

'I put it there. It is quite safe.'

'Now come out at once! Ann, I insist on it!' Rachel stormed. 'Do you hear?' And, after a little parley, Ann consented to come out, probably because the water was cold—and she alone could have borne it so long. But her feet, numb and stone-cold, had to be rubbed and dried, and her stockings and shoes to be put on, and, to Rachel's dismay, her petticoats were wet. Then to everything that had to be done, the child opposed a passive resistance, so that more than twenty minutes elapsed before they were ready to start.

Rachel knew herself to blame, and that she should not have suffered the child to paddle at this season—and once they were on the homeward path she resolutely pressed the pace, so that when they emerged from the forest and sighted the house, some margin of daylight still remained. But then a dreadful thing happened. 'I'll have my bracelet now,' Ann said.

'Your bracelet?'

'You took it from the bank, you know. I saw you.'

'Oh!' Rachel stood, horror-stricken. 'I left it on the tree where we were sitting.'

'Well,' Ann cried in triumph. 'You've done it now! It's your forget. And we'll have to go back. And it will be dark, black dark, before we get home. Hurrah!'

Rachel was appalled. The bracelet was a gift of Captain Dunstan's and, being set with amethysts, was of value. According to Ann's version, it had been presented to him by a French lady in acknowledgment of his generous treatment of the passengers on a French packet that he had taken in the Indian seas. My lord, on the other hand, maintained that it had been loot, bought

for half a guinea from a fo'c'sle hand. But whichever story was true, its loss would be no small thing, and Ann knew this and made the most of it. 'Hurrah!' she cried. 'It's almost dark now, and we must go back!'

'You will do nothing of the kind,' Rachel said with temper. 'You will go straight to the house. It's not two hundred yards, and no harm can come to you. It is still light. I will go back for it.'

'But it is mine and I——'

'You will go straight home!' Rachel insisted, firm for once.

'Well,' rebelliously, 'I shall tell mother whose fault it was!'

But Rachel was angry and a little frightened. 'You will do as you are told!' she said.

For once Ann gave way. 'Well, all right,' she said. 'You need not get into a pucker about it. It wasn't my fault. I didn't lose it.'

'And you will change your petticoats the moment you reach the house.'

She stood and watched the child until she was within a hundred yards of the entrance-gates. Then, satisfied that no harm could come to her charge, Rachel turned, and as fast as she could she retraced her steps, little thinking that with every yard she was spinning a new colour into the thread of her life. She knew that dusk would be upon her before she could reach the brook, and that much of her return journey must be made in the dark, and under such conditions she had no taste for the loneliness of the forest. Still if anything happened to the bracelet she would be responsible, and she hardened her heart and put her best foot foremost. But she had already walked some miles, and her strength was flagging when at last she saw below her, dim and shadowy now, the open space beside the brook.

She saw it with relief, for it would be something at least to turn her face towards home and to have the terrors of the forest at her back, and she dropped quickly down to it. But when she was within twenty yards of the spot, which a zig-zag in the path had hidden for a moment, she perceived with alarm that it was tenanted. Two men were there, one seated on the fallen tree on which she had sat, the other standing with a foot resting on it. They had not heard her approach, for, with their heads close together, they were examining by the dim light something which the seated man held in his hand.

The bracelet ? It must be that.

Then for a moment she breathed more freely. No doubt the men were two of the forest rangers, and with that happy thought in her mind she approached them boldly, too anxious about the bracelet to count chances.

But when she was within five paces of the men they heard her and turned, and the one who was seated sprang to his feet. And now—when it was too late to avoid them—she took in their aspect, and it was with a shock of fear that she saw that they were not keepers. One wore an old uniform-coat and a soldier's broken hat, and both were filthy and ragged, with vagrant written plain upon their squalid persons. Rachel hesitated, alarm driving the colour from her face. She was alone, the dusky woodland rose high on each side, walling her in, and they held the bracelet. To them it was a monstrous prize, and help in that solitary place and at that hour was out of the question.

CHAPTER IX.

A BRUTE !

BUT the blood of the sturdy old divine, who was Mrs. South's pride, ran in the girl's veins. She owned the spirit that in a desperate strait rises to meet the emergency, and, with courage, wit also came at her call. She turned and deliberately beckoned with her hand as if to someone above her. 'Stay there !' she cried. 'I've found it !' Her voice rang unnaturally shrill, but it was only the clearer for that. Then she turned and with coolness, forced indeed, but the men could not know that, 'You've found my bracelet !' she said. 'I am much obliged to you. I shall be glad to—' for a moment her voice weakened, for the ruffians' greedy eyes and lowering faces appalled her—to reward you with a shilling for finding it.'

Her appearance had startled the men almost as much as their presence had startled her, for they too had their grounds for fear ; and they stared at her, doubtful and suspicious—stared at her and stared also with keen eyes up the path by which she had descended. There might be others with her—more likely than not, at that hour ; and it was well to be on the safe side. So, after a pause of suspense during which Rachel could almost hear her heart beat, one of the two answered her. 'God bless your feeling

heart, ma'am,' he said in a whining tone. 'We're poor men, ma'am, and hungry. If you have a shilling we'll thank you kindly.'

But their looks belied his words, and Rachel's fears began to get the better of her. Still, with an effort, 'Then here is the shilling,' she said. 'You are very welcome to it.' She fumbled for her purse, and got it out. But her fingers shook so nervously that she had much ado to separate the coin from others, and meantime the shadowy path on which the men's eyes were fixed disclosed no followers.

The man who had spoken nudged the other. 'All right,' he said, more roughly. 'Give us your shilling!' He advanced a step and held out his hand. But when Rachel presented the coin he grabbed the purse instead, and when she recoiled in terror, she found that the second man had slipped behind her and had cut off her retreat.

Then, 'D—n your shilling,' the man with the purse growled, casting off the mask. 'A pretty slut you, to offer us a shilling! Blast your impudence! What else have you got?'

She was quite helpless, and she could have no doubt now that they meant the worst, and that she was in deadly peril. But she kept her head, though she knew that at any moment panic might seize her by the throat. 'Then keep the purse, and give me the bracelet,' she said as steadily as she could. 'And I will—I will say nothing about it. But the bracelet is Lady Ellingham's, and if it is missed there will be a search.'

'Search be d—d!' the man retorted. 'We'll search you, and see if there's no more of the rhino about you! Or another of these pretty shiners!' And before Rachel could move the man sprang forward and grasped her by the shoulder. 'Here, Droughty,' he cried, as she made a desperate attempt to wrest herself from him, 'hold the little devil's hands, and we'll see what she's good for! Hold the trull's hands, do you hear, you fool, and I'll soon—'

But at that and at last Rachel's courage gave way, and she shrieked—what else could she do?—shrieked with all the power of a woman's lungs. The wretch who held her tried to thrust the tippet that covered her shoulders into her mouth. 'Stow it, you little slut!' he cried. 'Shut your pipe, will you?' But she fought with the strength of despair, her cries rang again and again down the dark aisles, scaring the wood-pigeons from their perches; and happily the second man was more timid or less forward, and hung

off. But her resistance could not have lasted many seconds, she was nearly at the end of her strength, when a sound louder than her screams—the report of a gun—rent the air. It paralysed her assailant, for the explosion was so near that the shots passed through the branches overhead. The ruffian's hands lost their grip, and she tore herself loose. The second man was already wheeling about, ready-poised for flight.

‘What the devil is it?’ a voice shouted from the farther side of the brook. The undergrowth in that quarter rustled and quivered, a figure broke through it, and appeared at the brink of the water. ‘What’s wrong there?’

It was enough. The intruder might be alone, but he had a gun, and the law, with its short shrift and halter, was behind him. As he leapt the brook, the men turned and fled. He had a glimpse of them, saw that they were two, had time to mark their appearance. Then only the sound of breaking branches betrayed the direction in which they were making off.

The man whose arrival had been so timely had reached the fallen trunk, and a second man had emerged beside the brook before the former saw the girl leaning exhausted against a tree. He stared at her almost as if he had not expected to see something of the kind. ‘The devil!’ he exclaimed. ‘Well, I thought, by G—d, no rabbit could squeak like that! A boatswain’s whistle was nothing to it! Are you hurt?’

His tone was abrupt and compelling, but Rachel could not speak. She could only shake her head. ‘D—d landsharks!’ he muttered. ‘Lord, who’d live ashore where such things be and your life not safe an hour? Were they for robbing you, my girl?’

Still she could not speak—she was feeling very sick—but she nodded. ‘Here, Tobin,’ the Captain said—for the Captain it was—‘take my gun and chase those sharks. If they show fight bear away and fire into them. Haul them to the constable’s, d’you hear, and see them in irons! I’ll stand by the young woman.’

The keeper took the gun and hurried away down the stream in the direction that the men had taken. The Captain turned to the girl. ‘Coming to?’ he asked.

Rachel heaved a deep sigh and found her voice. ‘Yes,’ she whispered. ‘But if you had not come up’—a shudder seized her, shaking her from head to foot—‘they would have murdered me.’

The Captain cast an eye round. In the open space a faint light

still lingered, but in the wood about them it was night. He doubted. The circumstances were queer. 'You're the governess, ain't you,' he said, 'that I gave a lift to ?'

'Yes.' She was beginning to recover control of herself.

'I thought so, by gad ! Thought I knew the cut of your jib. Well, ma'am, what the blazes were you doing here ? At this time of night ?' There was suspicion in his tone.

'I left the bracelet—Lady Ann's bracelet—here,' she murmured. 'It was my fault and I came back for it.'

'A d—d silly thing to do !'

'Those men had found it. Please, will you look. I saw them drop it when—when you came up. It is by the tree, I think,' she explained, with a shudder.

He stooped, peered about, and after a short search he found the bracelet lying among the fallen leaves. 'Five pounds worth, he said. 'And you were foolish enough to come here for it—at this time ! You ought to be broke for it, ma'am. But,' he looked doubtfully at her, 'are you sure that you are speaking by the mark, young woman ? Not pipe-claying the account, eh ? Didn't come here to meet some young shaver ?'

The blood returned to Rachel's face. 'No !' she said indignantly. 'I left the bracelet and I came back to look for it. The men had found it and I—I was too near them, when I saw them, to escape. I had to—to do the best I could !' Her voice shook, for she was on the verge of angry tears. 'I—I offered them a shilling—for finding it. I thought that they were going to take the shilling, but they seized my purse and—and took hold of me, and I——' at last under the stress of the things remembered, she broke down and sobbed without check.

The Captain, staring at her, wished himself anywhere else, and after watching her for a moment, 'Oh, for God's sake, don't pipe up like that,' he said irritably. 'They've cleared off and you are safe and there's an end of it. It was your fault for coming ashore without leave, young woman. Come, come, ma'am, enough of that ! Can you walk ?'

She tried to choke back her sobs. She stammered that she could.

'Then let's be going ! The sooner the better, if you don't want your name to be sent up to the quarter-deck to-morrow ! Come, come, brace up, ma'am ! And first haul in your sheets !'

He pointed to her tippet and kerchief which the ruffian's violence

had dragged from her shoulders, leaving them partly bare. Rachel had been unconscious of it; now with a blush which the darkness covered, she tucked in the kerchief and drew the tippet down, with a healthy sting of anger that did her good. The Captain's roughness had at least spared her the pain of obligation, and as she turned with trembling limbs to go with him, the effort costing her more than he thought, she made up her mind that he was the most odious man she had ever met. When he offered his arm she declined it curtly—she would walk till she dropped before she would take it! ‘No,’ she said. ‘I can walk better by myself—I thank you.’

‘Well, I dare say you can. There's certainly one thing you can do, young woman, and that is scream! Lord, it goes through my head now.’

Brute! Rachel thought.

‘Tobin would have it that it was a rabbit, but I said, no rabbit! ’ He chuckled at the remembrance. ‘No rabbit in a stoat's mouth ever made a noise like that.’

And the man called himself a gentleman! Rachel trembled with indignation. And presently, her wounded spirit giving her strength, ‘Have you ever been in danger of your life?’ she asked. ‘Very near to—to death, sir?’

He seemed to take time to think. Then, ‘Well, young woman, once or twice. Within hail of it, may be.’

‘And were you not frightened?’

She fully expected that he would deny it and she had made up her mind not to believe him. But with a sort of relish, ‘Frightened?’ he said. ‘Lord, you may swear to that! Frightened? I wished myself anywhere else I can tell you, as I wager you did! Wished myself ashore, by G—d!’

The admission disappointed her, but she took it up. ‘Yet you are a man!’ she said, a sting in her tone. ‘And—and I was a woman and—helpless! Don't you think I had a right to be frightened?’

‘And to scream. To be sure! Why not? Of course you had, and you did it too, ma'am! ’ He laughed again at the remembrance. ‘You did it, by Jove, as if you'd been tied up at the gangway.’

Oh, he was a brute! He deserved no answer and Rachel vouchsafed none. If obligation there was, if he had saved her life, he had certainly wiped off the debt, and she owed him nothing! She plodded dumbly up the ascent, dragging one foot after another, and

presently he began to whistle to himself. Then in place of whistling, he fell to humming :

'At the Battle of the Nile I was there all the while,
I was there all the while at the battle of the Nile'

in a way that vividly recalled to her her ride in the postchaise. Her nerves were on edge with exhaustion, and after a time she could bear it no longer. She had to speak. 'That is doggerel !' she said irritably. 'It isn't poetry.'

'No,' he replied coolly. 'It is better. It is truth.'

'Were you there ?' She longed to snub him.

'Well, it happens I was,' he answered dryly. 'There or thereabouts.'

She was taken aback, and a little shocked by her own rudeness. 'Then do you know Lord Nelson ?' she asked with, weary as she was, a scrap of interest. For Nelson's name was then a name to conjure with. His portrait and Lady Hamilton's were in every print-shop ; his character, his exploits, his past, were the subjects of a thousand arguments, debates, disputations. He was belauded, slandered, deified, belittled. Some worshipped him, some sneered at him. But with the populace he was an idol, and when he appeared in public the common people crowded about him as if he had been a monarch walking the streets.

'Yes, I've seen him,' the Captain admitted—reluctantly as it seemed. 'Nothing to see ! A little chap, light in the waist and thin as a curl-paper, about your rig, ma'am ! Thinning on the fore-top, which you are not. Nothing to look at and mild as milk, God bless you. One arm, one eye, about half a man, and sick as a three months' old puppy when there's a breeze. Weighs about half a ship's boy. But in action, when the bulkheads are down and the linstocks are lighted, then, ma'am—'

He paused so long that Rachel said 'Yes ?'

'A flame of fire !'

'Oh !' The words were so unlike the speaker that Rachel gasped.

He whistled. 'Lights ahead !' he announced. 'Thank God we're here.' His next words were a fresh surprise. 'Well I'll say this, young woman ! You are not of the swooning sort, and thank heaven for that, for I know more about missing stays than unlacing them, and begad I thought at one time that it would come to that ! What ? Sheering off ? The door's open and they're looking out for us. I expect—'

'I go in by the side door,' Rachel said. 'Thank you!' She paused in the act of turning away, and then—she could not be churlish after all—'I am much obliged to you—for what you did,' she added.

'Well, I could not do much less!' In a moment he was almost good-humoured.

'No, that is true,' she said. 'Thank you.'

She was moving away to the side door, her one desire to enter without notice. But unfortunately, as she did so, the light that poured from the open entrance fell upon her. 'Is that Miss South?' a voice asked—a voice bleak as the east wind.

Rachel had no choice after that but to advance into the light.

'Yes,' she faltered. 'I have been detained, Lady Ellingham. I am very sorry. I sent Lady Ann back. I—I hope she came in.'

'She came in, yes—soaked to the waist,' Lady Ellingham replied in cutting accents. 'If this,' as poor Rachel, hardly able to keep her feet, crept into the full light of the hall, and white with fatigue, stood exposed, in all the disorder of her dress, to the looks of the servants whom my lady's anger had brought to the spot, 'if this is an instance of your care of Ann, Miss South! And of your own conduct—'

'She's had a bit of a burst-up,' muttered the Captain, making eyes over the culprit's head.

But my lady was too angry to be diverted. She had never taken to the governess, for reasons she knew best herself; and those unlucky wet petticoats and this late return, which the Captain's company did not mitigate, completed the business. 'I am most seriously displeased, Miss South,' she said.

Rachel was too sick and too weary to contend, but she made an effort to explain. 'I left Lady Ann's bracelet,' she said. 'And I went back for it, and—'

The Countess cut her short. 'I will hear your excuses to-morrow,' she said. 'I wish to hear no more now. Will you be good enough to go to your room?'

'Oh come, Kitty,' the Captain remonstrated. 'You don't understand—'

'I understand enough,' Lady Ellingham retorted. 'I wish to hear no more. Be good enough to go to your room, Miss South, and I will speak to you in the morning.'

Rachel attempted no further defence. She walked trembling to the staircase, her heart bursting with indignation. Oh, these

cruel, inhuman, unfeeling people ! The light dazzled her, the floor moved up and down, the stairs wavered before her, it was only by seizing the friendly hand-rail that she managed to keep her feet until she had passed up and was out of sight. And that coward who had said hardly one word for her ! Who had allowed her to be blamed and reprimanded and put to shame before the servants ! Who had let her fight her own battle, though he knew what she had gone through, though he knew what she had suffered, and how ill she was !

She went giddily along the passages and gained at last the haven of her room. She turned the key in the lock, and the world, the hard cruel world shut out, she flung herself, crying bitterly, on her bed. One thought was still uppermost in her. 'The coward ! Oh, the coward !' she sobbed again and again. And she thought how differently, how nobly another would have behaved in his place ! How boldly, with what eloquence *he* would have sprung to the rescue, how staunchly, how manfully he would have insisted on being heard ! Ah, he would ! He would not have suffered her to be wronged and stood by silent—though for him to take up her cause spelled courage indeed ! For he like her was a dependant !

It was in the injustice, the unfairness of it that the sting lay ! She was a dependant and therefore wrong or right, she was condemned in advance ! She was helpless, powerless.

But it was all for the best—she was brought so low that she admitted it bitterly. In the morning she would be sent away, she would be sent home in disgrace. But better so ! Far better that she should go, before she had fresh occasion to compare *him* with others, before *his* goodness so grew upon her as to sap the last strongholds of pride and self-respect ! Before the sweet plague, that had stolen so insensibly, so subtly, into her veins, overcame her altogether, and she had no longer the strength of mind to hide her folly.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTMAS IN WESSEX.

BY ROWLAND GREY.

THE proved fallacy of generalisation prevents few from insisting that the Christmas of prose romance was born, set to the music of the 'Christmas Carol,' and died with Dickens. To assert that he has a living rival—Thomas Hardy—is to court contradiction, yet it is the plain truth. Dickens was the autocrat of all the Christmases of the mean streets of his own London. He transmutes the negus of Bob Cratchit into a 'drink divine' by the elixir of love. He makes the rheumatic sigh to shake a leg at Mr. Fezziwig's ball, when the fiddler who 'tuned like fifty stomach aches,' breaks into Sir Roger de Coverley. He causes the dyspeptic to yearn for an orgy of mince-pie such as the Fat Boy—that inarticulate Brillat-Savarin—enjoyed unscathed. Even to shop with Dickens in his adored December fog is a multi-coloured adventure.

His Kentish Christmas at Dingley Dell has charm and superlative cherry brandy. He is equally at ease in Joe Gargery's cottage, where the guests waited in vain *after* the plum pudding for that 'bit o' savoury pork pie' alleged to be 'laid a top of anything' with impunity! Yet it was certainly in London he was at his radiant best, for Dickens and nature were never intimates, whereas nature and Hardy are lovers. Thus all with the wit to apply the word genius to his work, give him the palm for real delineation of the rural Christmas of once upon a time. There are wide divergencies of treatment. Guests at Mr. Wardle's 'go to church' as part of their routine, likewise Joe and Pip. Tiny Tim goes too, and gives a memorable reason when he comes back.

Mr. Hardy uses the village church at the festival not as part of the *mise en scène*, but as an essential of the subtle atmosphere of Christmas he conveys with such finesse. The waits of Dickens are supers—the waits of Hardy have the importance of the Greek chorus. To hear them talk is a liberal education in Christmas ethics. Their absence would be a calamity. The simple Christmas gospel of Dickens has flown to the ends of the earth in many languages, the sadder wistfulness of Hardy as to the great miracle remains intensely English.

Is this the reason why the Germans have let him alone? A few

mediocre translations, followed by a conspiracy of critical silence. Not for him the dubious honour of trailing clouds of glory with Shakespeare and—*mirabile dictu*—Gilbert—as beings of spiritually Teutonic origin !

Whether we regard Hardy as a romancer who has turned poet, or a poet who has enriched us with great romances, a brief note of admiration of his Christmas poetry is compelled by its quality. *The Two Serenaders*, with its melancholy irony, is 'a song of Christmas Eve.' *The Rash Bride* is the story of an experience of the Mellstock choir on its rounds. *Seen by the Waits* is an arresting example of Hardy the Heinesque. As they pause by moonlight at the door of the lonely lady of the manor, the waits perceive her dancing in her solitude, 'thin draped in her robe of white.'

' She had learnt (we heard when homing)
 That her roving spouse was dead.
 Why she had danced in the gloaming,
 We thought, but never said.'

A fine reticence on the part of the singers who inspired *The Dead Quire*. In *A Christmas Ghost Story* the poet asks the bitter question :

' I would know
 By whom and when, the all-earth gladdening law
 Of Peace brought in by the Man Crucified
 Was ruled to be inept and set aside,
 And what of logic and of truth appears,
 In tacking *Anno Domini* to the years ?
 Near twenty hundred thus have hied,
 Yet tarries still the Cause for which He died.'

Then comes *The Oxen*, that cry of the heart in such pathetic contrast of the faith ringing a silver carillon through the glad confident Noëls of Cammaërts. Its beautiful reverence places it outside the pale of criticism.

' Christmas Eve and twelve of the clock,
 Now they are all on their knees,
 An elder said as we sat in a flock
 By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek, mild creatures where
 They dwelt in a strawy pen,
 Nor did it occur to one of us there,
 To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
 In these years ! Yet I feel
 If someone said on Christmas Eve,
 " Come see the oxen kneel,

In the lonely barton down by the coomb
 Our childhood used to know,"
 I would go with him in the gloom
 Hoping it might be so.'

In 'Tess,' Mr. Hardy deals in lighter vein with the legend once deep-rooted in Wessex. There William Dewey reappears as hero of an amazing tale. 'In his youth he charmed a bull by playing on his fiddle as he ran away from it, but he could not manage to climb the fence, because to do so he had to stop playing, until he hit upon the plan of playing the 'Tivity hymn, when the bull thought it must be Christmas and went down on its knees. Before it realised it had been fooled, Dewey was over the hedge.'

'Far from the Madding Crowd,' twice translated into French, has kept its jubilee worthily this last year in the pages of CORNHILL. The Christmas there, as all know, ends in murder and madness. The insanity of the passion-wrecked farmer has been unjustly censured as too sudden. It is really most skilfully foreshadowed from the first by his conduct. 'The party was the great subject of talk in Weatherby. It was not that the rarity of Christmas parties made this one a wonder, but that Boldwood should be the giver. The announcement had an abnormal and incongruous sound as if one should hear of croquet playing in a cathedral aisle.' It is odd to find croquet 'crocket' in both the French translations, which, painstaking as they are, convince us that the grand Biblical English can alone convey the fine shades of Hardy. The change of name to Barbara does not atone as title for the loss of the untranslatable line of Gray or suit Bathsheba bewitching in the trailing mourning gown which sombre presentiment forbids her to lighten. There is gloom that nothing availed to lighten—neither the Yule log of vast proportions, big bushes of mistletoe, nor three immense pots 'like Shadrach, Meshech and Abed-Nego in the midst of the roaring kitchen fire making mouths water.' Tragedy lurked behind the garlands, to step forth and silence the feet of the unenthusiastic dancers. The shots ring out. The murder of Serjeant Troy is drama, not melodrama.

Paul Margueritte was at pains to translate 'The Return of the

Native' well, and *Le Retour au Pays Natal* from such a pen is a tribute. Few books preserve more ancient English customs than this in the exact and detailed chapters dealing with the mummers. Nothing of this detail is superfluous. Mr. Hardy never writes of what he knows because he knows it. Christmas is woven indissolubly into the plot. The fantastic project of disguising herself to act a lad's part in the play of *Saint George* to break the intolerable monotony proves a turning point in the perturbed life of the star-crossed Eustacia, with her Greek origin, her mysterious beauty. She longs to see and subjugate Clym Yeobright, yet the distance from church for dwellers on bleak Egdon Heath keeps her from the usual rallying point. 'In an ordinary village or country town one can safely calculate that either on Christmas Day or the Sunday contiguous, any native home for the holidays who has not through age or ennui lost the appetite for seeing and being seen, will turn up in some pew or other shining with hope, self-consciousness and new clothes. Thus the congregation is merely a Tussaud collection of all the celebrities who have been born in the neighbourhood.'

Eustacia's daring scheme is made practicable by the dog-like devotion of the boy Charley. Money he will none, but he is ready to surrender his part and keep the secret if allowed to hold the bare hand of his goddess for half an hour. Charley is a male Marty South drawn with a few firm strokes. He is dazzled by the speed with which Eustacia learns the nine speeches which have cost him six weeks' hard labour. 'You be a clever lady' is his admiring comment as she repeats :

'Here come I, a Turkish knight
Who learnt in Turkish land to fight.'

The mummers go through the frosty night to Mrs. Yeobright's condescendingly general gathering. Here, as everywhere in the pages of Hardy, scenery and weather are not decorative, descriptive adjuncts, rather an integral part of the action. The mummers wait outside, and Eustacia first sees Clym as she is standing in darkness by the lighted window, watching the dancers move to the tune of 'Nancy's Fancy,' or the celebrated 'Devil's Dream,' 'without beginning, ending, or middle.' When the mummers were summoned, hump-backed Father Christmas made a complete entry, swinging his huge club, and in a general way clearing the stage for the actors proper, while he informed the company in smart verse that he was come, welcome or not.

' Make room, make room, my gallant boys,
 And give us space to rhyme ;
 We've come to show Saint George's play
 Upon this Christmas time.'

Eustacia was not nervous. ' Dash '—a favourite word with Mr. Hardy—' being all that was wanted to carry her triumphantly through, she adopted as much as was necessary.' She was not, however, much of a fighter. ' The valiant soldier was slain by a preternaturally feeble thrust from Eustacia, Jim in his ardour for genuine histrionic art coming down like a log upon the stone floor with force enough to dislocate his shoulder.' In the audience is the immortal Granfer Cantle, ' light as a kite when anything's going forward.' Granfer is irresistible and quite aware of his own value. ' In the year '4 'twas said there wasn't a finer figure in the whole South Wessex than I looked the day we ran out o' Budmouth harbour because it was thought Boney had landed round the point.'

' The remainder of the play ended, the Saracen's head was cut off, and St. George stood as victor ; nobody commented any more than they would have commented on the fact of mushrooms coming in the autumn or snowdrops in spring. They took the piece as phlegmatically as the actors themselves. It was a phase of cheerfulness, which was as a matter of course to be passed through every Christmas, and there was no more to be said. . . . They sang the plaintive chant which follows the play, during which all the dead rise to their feet in a sudden and awful way.' Did Rostand perchance find here the suggestion for the best scene in *L'Aiglon*? The success in France of *Le Retour au pays Natal* makes this possible.

And in the midst of Christmas junketting desire draws Clym to the eager, alluring Eustacia. Her mask of fluttering ribbons she will not raise to eat ; she brushes it aside to take the cup of hot elder wine he tenders, destined to prove a philtre potent as the gift of Tristram to Iseult. The hot crowded room, the loud music, the men at their hearty meal, nothing of this can give pause to the magic advent of a fatal passion. The air to these two is a-flutter with wings, and the spell is quickly wrought. Once more a pair of lovers seem to themselves to stand alone in a world of their own. The rich low voice, the dark sombre eyes like black velvet pansies, these suffice to enchain Clym before he has seen the beautiful pale face. Eustacia knows this as she goes back to the sturdy old grandfather, who, when she confesses her mad escapade, forbids its repetition

yet honestly owns it would have delighted him forty years ago. These Christmas chapters are essential to the plot of the great novel many rank first. The fragrance of love's young dream haunts them.

'The Mellstock Quire,' which was the original title of the more happily named 'Under the Greenwood Tree,' figures first in one of those short stories which add Mr. Hardy to the brief list of English writers who have achieved perfection in the 'conte.'

'The Grave by the Handpost,' a Christmas tale, is gruesome after the rare manner of Poe. The burial of the old soldier who commits suicide, at the four cross roads with a stake thrust through his body after the barbarous old custom, takes place at Christmas. His friends pause there to chant 'the favourite No. 15, "He comes the prisoners to release,"' with the pitying explanation 'we've never played to a dead man before, but it seems more merciful than to go away and leave them.' When his son returns, to be told only part of the ghastly truth, he spends all he has on a headstone inscribed, 'I am no more worthy to be called thy son.' For the terrible reason of which he is unaware, the corpse could not be removed as he ordered before leaving for his regiment. He returns from warfare in Spain to find the moss-grown stone flung aside, and kills himself by the cross roads. By a bitter irony the scrap of paper bearing a petition to be laid beside his father is overlooked, and a more compassionate generation interts him in consecrated ground.

Such a story might make doubters question whether Mr. Hardy can give us a 'Merry Christmas.' As enchanting evidence to the contrary comes that veritable Christmas number, 'Under the Greenwood Tree.' He may well have thought of naming it after the band that plays the lead. 'If you'd thrive in musical religion, stick to strings.' There never were waits in all fiction like those who tapped 'the little barril beyond compare,' and sup on the most tempting of crisp rashers. And does any heroine of them all make a prettier picture than lovely, sleepy Fancy Day, thanking the singers at her window. 'If she'd a bin rale waxwork, she couldn't a bin comlier.' 'As like a spiritual vision as ever I wish to see.' Small wonder Dick Dewey lost his heart at once when all the old fellows were thus bewitched.

'Remember Adam's fall O thou man,' 'Rejoice, ye tenants of the earth.' The songs of gladness come upon the midnight clear. Their echo conjures back the rustic grace of a day that is dead. In

the best vein of Hardy humour—and what a best it is!—is the description of the elaborate toilets made for the Christmas service next morning. Poor Dick's boots shine with polish hours before his hoped-for glimpse of Fancy. There were washings in the back kitchen such as were splashed for no other festival. Fiddles and bass viols were drawn forth carefully from green baize bags. 'The choristers rattled upstairs like a regiment o' cavalry.' This Christmas there was an innovation making the old brigade very wroth if it caused the service to be more exciting than that to which good Dolly Wintrop strove to tempt Silas Marner, for the girls in the congregation below actually joined in the hymns.

'Did ye hear that, souls?' asked Mr. Renny in a groaning breath. 'Brazen-faced hussies.' 'Trew, they were every note as loud as the fiddlers an all, if not louder.'

'Fiddlers and all,' echoed Bowman bitterly. 'Shall anything be found bolder than united woman?'

Mr. Spinks murmured, 'What business have people to tell maidens to sing like that when they didn't sit in the gallery?'

'Tis the gallery that have got to sing every man knows,' said Mr. Renny. 'Why souls, what's the good o' the ancients spending scores o' pounds to build galleries if people down in the depths of the church sing like that?'

Even the dance at Mr. Fezziwig's does not go with more swing than that at Tranter Dewey's which unexpectedly begins at such a fashionably late hour. For old William insists there shall be 'no dancing till after twelve o'clock,' a recognition of the sacred character of the day sharply at variance with modern use and wont. What is odder still is that even impatient Dick, gazing at his Fancy in 'gauzy white with blue facings,' 'like a flower among vegetables,' never dreams of disobedience to the village autocrat. At last the second tuning of the fiddles begins, and Dick secures Fancy for 'that most delightful of dances the six hands round.' The heat is intense, and stout Reuben Dewey may be pardoned for making coats or no coats the burning question. Finally the veterans foot it in their shirt sleeves whilst Dick and his rival suffocate in their coats to do honour to Fancy's elegance. 'New music at supper time, the rattle of the knives and forks,' is a comment to which the Tranter rejoins cheerfully, 'Aye, and I don't know but that 'tis sweeter when you get about forty.'

'There's a friendly tie o' some sort between music and eating.' This remark leads up to a long story from the music-loving Michael

Mail, who relates how once when dining at the 'Three Choughs' a brass band struck up outside and he 'chewed his liver and lights in time to the music—beautiful 'twere.'

To take up 'Under the Greenwood Tree,' evergreen as holly, is to sigh to quote entire chapters. The gay little classic writ in clear English undefiled is a relief indeed from a surfeit of modern sham epigram with its tinsel clink and the cheap 'cleverality' Charlotte Brontë may well have despised. With the brilliant exception of Mr. Kipling's Christmas ball embellished with the presence of 'William the Conqueror,' no writers of to-day dispute the sway of Mr. Hardy over his charming Christmas kingdom. They show their wisdom. 'There is no one beside him, and no one above him.'

THE CEMETERY PATHWAY SPEAKS.

Often I dream of laughter and loud tones,
 Often I dream of eyes happy and sweet,
 And then awake to hear low sighs and moans,
 And watch pale folk go by with dragging feet.
 And hearing, watching, bitterly I mourn
 That I should dream such dreams, then wake forlorn.

Over me go the wheels bearing the dead,
 And all the mourners: sighs are given, tears are shed,
 And scarcely a word at all is said.
 O what a sad thing Love is,—saddest of things!
 Because of it, what sorrow springs!

There is no part of me, but tears
 Have fallen on it . . . Hearken to my longing of many years:
 I'd be a green-hung path set all about with flowers,
 Near to a creek whose running would make music thro' the
 hours;
 With children playing on me: leaping, shouting out with glee;
 With nothing but the loveliest of life to hear and see . . .

How pitifully I dream, and dwell on what is vain.
 Hearken! I hear the rolling wheels again. . . .

VERNON KNOWLES.

FROM THE DIARIES OF SIR ALGERNON WEST.

EDITED BY HORACE HUTCHINSON.

THE Private Diaries of Sir Algernon West, which he put into my hands for publication after his death, were brought out by Mr. John Murray in 1922. They carried the story of his public life down to the year 1898 and the death of Mr. Gladstone, his beloved chief. There remained some later diaries which prolonged the story for several years. At this later time Sir Algernon was not so much at the centre of political events, and what he has to tell us, in his pleasant gossipy way, has not the same value as a contribution to history. But it continues pleasant gossip, none the less ; he still moves in interesting company ; it is lighter but no less delightful gossip.

The later diaries do not follow the course of events as closely as when he was at Mr. Gladstone's right hand. The entries are occasional. There is indeed one year of which the account, as he records it, is contained in no more than a single sheet. Why, I do not know, for he gives no explanation. Possibly the original put on record events which he did not wish should be made public. We can but conjecture.

The first of these last pages has date June 19, 1898, about a month after Mr. Gladstone's death.

June 19, 1898.

At Lady Lewis'¹ dinner on the 14th June I had an agreeable talk with Burne-Jones, who said change of occupation brought rest, which idleness did not necessarily do. He had been all the morning working at his big picture, and then, tired out, he turned to a small one, which rested him. 'It is not the work one does,' he said truly, 'that tires, but the work one does not do.'

Later on we compared our ages. Two days after I heard of his death ! Will one ever take to heart that 'in the midst of life we are in death ?'

June 20, 1898.

Came up from Waddesdon.² Met H. James (Lord) at Mrs. C.

¹ The wife of Sir George Lewis, the famous solicitor.

² Waddesdon Manor, Bucks. Baron F. de Rothschild's.

Lawrence's.¹ He reminded me, while regretting the loss of so many of our old friends, of the first time we met, which was at a remarkable dinner at E. Levy's²—when Bulwer Lytton, Wilkie Collins, etc., were there, and when H. Calcraft³ told a story of how somebody in the debate on female Suffrage had said to Mr. Gladstone: 'You should recollect that popularity has no future and fame no present,' Calcraft adding that it was not original. I had been in the House on the occasion and knew H. James had said this, so kicked H. Calcraft under the table, but too late; H. James, however, said at once he had quoted Southey and made no secret of it.

A lovely day in June, Lord Rosebery and I went down together to Hayes and were received by my great friend Mrs. Eric Hambro. It was the birthplace of Pitt, now owned by Everard Hambro.⁴ Here Lord Rosebery planted a tree in remembrance of his visit. Hambro told us he could find nothing of Pitt's. The only thing he had ever found was a horse block on which Lord Chatham put W. Pitt as a boy, and made him practise elocution, but it had unfortunately been burnt by the coachman.

Rosebery said John Morley on matters not political might be harmonious. Was he one I wanted to see Prime Minister? I said, 'No, but I should have liked to see Harcourt, even if it was only for a week.'

'A disastrous week it would be,' he answered. 'What an impossible man he is!'

[This is the last entry for the year 1898: and the whole of 1899 is covered by the following short entry:]

1899.

I was much occupied all through this year with the protracted sittings of the Licensing Commission—the details of which are too many to enumerate here and which led to a painful difference between myself, who signed the majority report, and Lord Peel who signed the minority report. The full particulars of the Commission and our reports are set forth in an article in the *Nineteenth Century*. Knowles the editor told me it was so sought after that

¹ Wife of the Hon. Charles Lawrence, now Lord Lawrence, of Kingsgate.

² Mr. Edward Levy afterwards took the name of Lawson, and became 1st Baron Burnham. He owned the *Daily Telegraph*.

³ Mr. Henry Calcraft, an old friend of Sir A. West in the Civil Service; Secretary to the Board of Trade.

⁴ Head of Hambro's banking house, now Sir Everard Hambro, K.C.V.O.

he was compelled to have a reprint of the Review, a thing which had only once happened since its first issue.

[With the commencement of the nineteen-hundreds the entries begin to be more regular.]

1900.

I began the year with visits to Aston Clinton¹ and Mentmore,² when Lord Rosebery asked me whether I did not think the Government was hated? But he did not consider the Opposition was more beloved. Why was it? I said, want of a policy, and still more want of an acknowledged leader, but just as our conversation was getting interesting, we were interrupted by the arrival of Leo Rothschild, and Asquith and I went off to Ascot to play golf.

I met at Lady Tweedmouth's, Lord Lovat, who was going to take out a number of his gillies as sharp-shooters to South Africa, and Oliver Borthwick, then Editor of the *Morning Post*, who wanted to see a Coalition Government composed of Lords Salisbury and Rosebery with Chamberlain.

I recalled Disraeli's wise saying: 'England does not love coalitions' and thought it quite impossible.

During all this time we were suffering reverses in that wicked war in South Africa, and bad news succeeded bad news every day.

The Lord Mayor in a patriotic speech, overpowered by his commercial mind, gave as a *Toast*—'The Army and Navy and Auxiliary Stores!'

A school child being asked the definition of water said, 'It was a pure white liquid, which turned black the moment you put your hands into it.'

For many years I had been a visitor on behalf of the Home Secretary to the Female Convict Prison at Woking. The work was deeply interesting. The one great blot which I tried in vain to remove was the sentence of death passed on poor girls for infanticide. True it was not put into effect, but the terror and bitterness were in the poor girls' minds which they never got over, and a stain remained for ever. I have seen uneducated, ignorant girls who had been seduced by their masters and turned out of the house, unable to provide work or food for their unhappy child, and for destroying it sentenced to death. At last a bill was brought into the House of Lords giving power to the judges to omit the sentence

¹ Aston Clinton, Lord Battersea's.

² Mentmore, Lord Rosebery's.

of death for a first offender, and was thrown out, not one bishop voting for it—indeed all mitigations of punishment have invariably been opposed by the spiritual peers !

[Woking was required for military purposes and the establishment was removed to Aylesbury.]

All this while the Boer War was running its calamitous course, and the diaries make occasional reference to it.]

The relief of Kimberley came as a bright gleam of sunshine amidst all our late disasters—but no calamities ever appear to affect London Society, which, as in the days of Noe, continues its dinners and plays for so-called charitable purposes.

There were some Tableaux at His Majesty's Theatre, where all the beautiful women were pressed into the service, and certainly played their parts well, especially Lady Westmorland who looked magnificently beautiful.

For the first time I met Carruthers Gould, who is probably the best caricaturist of this or any day. He told me that all his drawings were made from memory.

My friend, Lord Welby, was at this time Chairman of the London County Council, and was in the habit of giving dinners to various colleagues, among whom were the labour members, whom it was a delight to meet, they were so simple and free from affectation of any kind. Of course they were picked men, but above them all was John Burns, whose knowledge and experience of various parts of the world was most interesting.

We had some logs from broken-up ships on the fire, and Steadman¹ said how it reminded him of his early days when he had to saw them up.

Dined with Welby. He told me that in May 1899, F. Greenwood dined with Sir William Harcourt, John Morley and Chamberlain, who said then, that if he could carry public opinion with him he would fight the Boers !

At Armitstead's² with John Morley, Spender and Robert Reid. There I met Mr. Barton, the Prime Minister of New South Wales.

Soon after I met Mr. Watts the Painter, who made the extraordinary statement that all men of action had grey eyes. Napoleon had, and he was the only one of his family.

¹ Mr. W. C. Steadman was a Labour member when Labour members were few.

² Lord Armitstead, with whom Mr. Gladstone used to stay a great deal.

I spent a day at Farnham Castle talking of my Licensing Commission with Bishop Davidson,¹ who was very agreeable.

Everard Hambro asked me if I would like to be chairman of Allsop's Brewery Company, which I declined, as I did also to be trustee, feeling that the matter was full of anxieties which I did not covet. There is no doubt that it was a good concern in my days at the Inland Revenue, but had been utterly ruined by gross mismanagement.

1900.

It was about this time that a black-balling fever set in at Brooks's—a recrudescence of what had occurred in 1886.

Before Parliament met in the latter year, Edward Hamilton gave a dinner at the Club, at which Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Morley, Sir Reginald Welby, and Sir William Harcourt were among the guests. In the course of the evening came the news of Mr. Goschen's defeat at Liverpool, and Sir William, forgetting that Brooks's now included a number of Unionists (members even of the Tory Government elected at the Carlton), expressed his joy at the result of the Election in a somewhat boisterous manner, which not unnaturally annoyed some members of the Club, and no doubt accounted for the unfortunate blackballing of his son, which took place a few days after this event. Many Home Rulers were treated in the same way—Mr. Henry Primrose, who had been Mr. Gladstone's secretary, Sir Horace Davey, and others. Home Rulers were not going to take this 'lying down' and retaliations followed, Lord Wolmer being one of the victims. How far this war to the death might have gone will never be known, for the Committee of the Club wisely suspended the ballot until after Easter, and for some years things went smoothly. Then, however, the trouble recommenced and threatened to be serious. On one occasion before the Ballot began, Lord Granville, who was, and looked, very ill, rose from his chair and prayed that a truce might be made between the divisions and animosities of the members, with the result that the plague was stayed. No one ever so richly deserved the blessing promised to Peacemakers—I think it was the last speech he ever made, and it was worthy of him.

The portraits of Charles James Fox, many of which hang in the Club, now, with an apparently immortal calm, look down on Tories as well as Whigs where none but Whigs ever sat before.

¹ Now Archbishop of Canterbury.

May 1900.

On Friday, 18th May, I was at the Union of London Bank when the news of the relief of Mafeking arrived, and I witnessed from the window scenes which one cannot think of without shame.

I spent a pleasant Whitsuntide at Mells—the lovely old place of Jack Horner's in Wilts. Creighton, Bishop of London, was there, but did not impress me much, which was doubtless my fault—but an English Bishop's position is, I think, an impossible one, and the highest praise that he gains is in being spoken of as 'not the least like a Bishop.' But Alfred Lyall, Lady Wenlock and the Duchess of Sutherland were there, and we were enlivened by dear Godfrey Webb, whose kindly wit and humour were never absent.

Pretoria was taken, and produced scenes very like those of Mafeking. How I wish we could take these tardy successes with thankful dignity!

After travelling in the summer, I spent the autumn in various country visits in England,

On my return I met Lord Acton in London, who had asked Sir A. Hardinge if he had ever heard of a book of Memoirs written by the widow of a Vendéan General and given to Louis XVIII., who left it on his table on leaving the Tuileries. When Bonaparte entered the 'Palais' he came across the book which, as it seized his fancy, he kept and read, evidently with interest, for many passages were scored with his thumb nail. It was subsequently found by Blücher in Bonaparte's travelling carriage, and given by him to Lord Hardinge who, in his turn, gave it to some lady. Sir A. Hardinge, however, could throw no light on the mystery and no one now knows who the lady was, or where the book is.

1900.

The present Government is called 'The Hotel Cecil' unlimited : or 'The Conseil de Famille.'

It is asked, 'What is the difference between the Empire and Chamberlain ?'

One is always enlarging, the other always contracting.

Winston Churchill, during the War, was correspondent of the *Morning Post*, and asked Redvers Buller if he ever saw it :

'Sometimes,' he answered, 'when my wife wants a scullery-maid.'

On December 3, the Chairman of the County Council gave a great dinner to the Prince of Wales. The speeches were all good, and far above the average. The Prince had a conversation after

dinner with me on some personal troubles which at that time were annoying me, and he gave an instance of that extraordinary sympathy which endeared him to all.

I ended the year, as often before, at Aston Clinton: a very literary party: Miss Cholmondeley, Mrs. Woods (authoress of the 'Village Tragedy'), Augustus Hare, Mrs. Ritchie, and (not literary) Arthur Collins.¹ Augustus Hare told us some very creepy ghost stories.

The Reviews were all favourable to my book, which of course pleased me, and made me think, conceitedly, that I was not altogether out of place in my society.

1901.

In January, while I was staying with the Andrew Hitchens' at their lovely place on The Hog's Back, we went to see Mr. Watts. He was very depressed about what he thought to be the deterioration of England, and wishing he had died like Leighton and Millais. But in his studio there was no sign of deterioration, and I admired especially a picture representing a travel-worn woman looking at a light on the horizon; she was wondering whether it was the conflagration of war or the dawning of peace. He said I was quite right, and considered it the best thing he had ever done, and he was over eighty when he painted it.

In the same month Lady Ribblesdale and I went with Lord Rowton to inspect one of his lodging houses, and were much impressed with their usefulness and the good arrangements. I urged upon Rowton the desirability of establishing such houses solely for women. Seeing of course the difficulties which had to be overcome, he said he would undertake it if I could procure £40,000 capital for him to start it.

Shortly afterwards, meeting Mr. Haddon, of North Audley Chapel, at the Cosmopolitan Club, and knowing him to be a friend of Mrs. Lewis', who was very rich, I asked if he thought it would be any use my writing and asking her to help us. He said: 'If you write at all, do not ask for a small sum, or she will throw your letter away with other begging letters with which she is pestered.' Acting on his advice, I wrote a long letter setting forth the wants of a woman's home, and asking for £40,000. I was not surprised at getting no answer, but after her death I was delighted to find that she had left over £50,000, which has now been the means of building

¹ Col. Arthur Collins, C.B. He held, at one time or other, several appointments about the Court.

the magnificent 'Ada Lewis' Home in the New Kent Road, which we now are hoping to see opened by the beginning of 1913.

Met Mrs. Humphry Ward at dinner. She told me that the characters in her books were all begun from people she knew but never completed as I thought.

Talking of Chateaubriand she said he was a very vain man, and always hid his legs behind a chair or sofa, so as to bring his fine head into greater prominence.

Sir Alfred Lyall and she did not properly appreciate, as I think, Trollope's novels; but they confessed that 'The Warden,' 'Dr. Thorne,' and 'Barchester Towers' were great works.

A lady asked Mr. Choate, the American Ambassador, who he would like to be if he were not Mr. Choate, and he very gallantly answered: 'Mrs. Choate's second husband.'

One night in February, with Captain Frederick and Sidney Greville, we went the rounds of the Salvation Army's Refuges, a sad and melancholy sight, and at 2 A.M. to a free Soup Kitchen, where nine hundred men were waiting for soup and a crust of bread. Many of them appeared able-bodied, and I gathered from the police and the Salvation Army Officers that the reason of their poverty was mainly that they would not submit to discipline of any kind; they preferred the life of 'cadging.' I felt ashamed, after such a sight as this, to get back to my fire and warm bed.

Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria lost heavily to a Jew. He said angrily: 'Monsieur, vous me mangez.' 'Non, Monsieur. C'est défendu par ma religion,' was the answer.

On the 15th March I went down with the Wenlocks to Portsmouth and inspected the *Ophir*—which was fitted up for the Prince and Princess of Wales' visit to the Colonies.

On our way back Lady Wenlock said: 'I always like to hear scandal, and it satisfies my curiosity, and I exercise my charity in not believing it.'

Called again on Mr. Watts at his Studio. He told me that no good picture should be dependent on the point of view from which it was looked at. It should be like a scene in the theatre and uniformly good from everywhere it was seen.

He thought that Sargent was ruining himself by his method, though he was a fine painter.

At the house of Moberly Bell, the autocrat of *The Times*, I met the great French Advocate, M. Labori, the Counsel of Dreyfus, who said that when he met — — — ¹ he wanted to have a talk

¹ An eminent Statesman who is still alive and talking.

with him, but he did not find an interval of silence in which to do it. It reminded me of a man who was accused of being cruel to his wife in not having spoken to her for a fortnight. 'I was afraid,' he said, 'of interrupting her.'

I met also John Oliver Hobbes (Mrs. Craigie) the Novelist, and Miss Flora Shaw, who told me of her experiences at Klondyke, as well as of her prospects in Nigeria, where she was going as the only English woman, to try to establish some sort of Society for the officers of the Native Regiment there.

In July I went for a cruise in Arnold Morley's yacht the *Alrunha* to the Channel Islands, where we were delayed by want of wind. This is not the greatest calamity, to my mind, that can befall a yachtsman, but I was prevented by it from keeping an appointment with Sir Julius Wernher who was going to show me a diamond from the de Beers mine which was valued at £250,000. I saw it, however, on another day, and I asked Wernher whether he thought that there was any chance of its being sold at that price. Of course he could not say, but in the previous year the Co. had sold a very inferior stone for £150,000 !

I was asked to join in a dinner of a few friends to Alfred Milner, whom personally I was very fond of, but whose S. African politics I detested. I was given to understand there was nothing political about it ; I was therefore very much annoyed at finding a dinner of 150 political admirers—Goschen making a real over-done speech of forty minutes—and I longed to shout :

'This is the man to whom, a few short years ago, you did not dare give a Commissionership of Inland Revenue.'

At a dinner at Lord Welby's, Arthur Godley said he placed Thirlwall and Lingard in the first class of accurate historians, Macaulay and Green in the second.

December 5.

One night I dined with the Moberly Bells, and the guests are worth recording—at any rate some of them : Lord Roberts, who said he recollects me at Eton, which I could not help thinking was very improbable ; Mr. Porter, the great U.S. Protectionist ; Mr. Westinghouse, the Railway Brake inventor ; Mrs. Harrison, Charles Kingsley's daughter, who wrote famous novels under the name of 'Lucas Malet,' the last and best 'The Far Horizon' ; Mrs. Blundell, the authoress of charming Devonshire novels ; Sir Mackenzie Wallace of Russian and 'National Biography' renown ; the Editor of *Literature*, whose name I did not know ; Mrs.

Little the traveller, and Lady Dorothy Nevill. I met Baden Powell, who had been a friend of my boy's at Charterhouse : he prophesied that this miserable Boer War would be over by the beginning of March. John Burns, to whom I preached compromise on the County Council affairs, said he knew the world was governed by it, and wished he had known it twenty years ago. I told him of a good quotation :

'The happiness of two is attained by the forbearance of one.'

At dinner at the Reays,¹ I heard from him, and he is a good authority, that all the stories going about London as to the unhappiness of the Prince Consort and Queen of Holland, were untrue.

I paid a visit to the Wernhers at Luton. He is charming, modest, and very frank about his past life. After service in the Chapel, he told me how, as a boy, he had been put by his father into a French House of Business ; when the war of 1870 broke out he was compelled to join a German Cavalry Regiment. At its conclusion, the French House took him back at a salary, I think, of £70 a year. Soon after he got an offer from another House of £150, which he accepted. His employer remonstrated with him for leaving them after they had taken him back, but he said that, while he quite appreciated their kindness, he had his way to make in the world, and therefore could not refuse the offer, but he would work for them until they were suited—and for months he worked double tides for both houses.

Then he was sent out to S. Africa with a member of the new firm, but feeling rather ashamed at going without a penny, he borrowed from his brother £12 10s. Soon his master wished to return to England, and he was made a partner, remaining in S. Africa. The Robinson mine was discovered, and his colossal fortune followed, though he often thought he was never so happy as he was with £150 a year and fewer cares. He told me how curiously old habits clung to a man : with all his wealth, he often found himself walking to King's Cross to get within a 1/- fare, but he always, when he got there, made it up to the cabman. Truly it has been said that Providence is a wonderful handicapper.

With advancing years friends try to mitigate the burden of them by assurances that each age has its compensations. I have never found any, but, looking back at the end of a long life, it is a comfort to feel that in my day the progress of the world, with few exceptions, has been continuous and increasing.

¹ Lord Reay was Under-Secretary for India 1894-95.

44 FROM THE DIARIES OF SIR ALGERNON WEST.

My life began with the great Reform Bill of 1832, and since that date, omitting the senseless folly and horrors of the Crimean War, and the inexcusable wickedness of the Boer War, every year has had its peaceful triumphs.

Drunkenness has diminished, and with it crime. Prisoners are treated kindly as human beings. Maniacs, instead of being chained together, with straw to lie on, and shown for 2d. a head, are treated with sympathy and kindness. Swearing, at any rate among educated people, has well-nigh ceased to exist. Our manners are pleasanter, while in Society, though cigarette smoking has increased, the odious habit of snuff-taking has ceased. Our morals have improved. The use of anæsthetics, and the antiseptic discoveries, have been invaluable, and surgical skill has increased. Our means of locomotion, electric light, baths, sanitation, food, have all improved, in the words of Mr. Gladstone, 'by leaps and bounds.'

1902.

At Aston Clinton I met the authoress of 'The Danvers Jewels' and 'Red Pottage'—Miss Cholmondeley.

Dining at Armitstead's the following day, I met Spencer Lyttelton and John Morley, and discussed the political situation.

Chamberlain had told John Morley that Rosebery would catch none of the Liberal Unionists, who were far more Tories than the old Tories themselves.

Morley attributed all our South African troubles to Milner's conduct at Bloemfontein, and surprised me by saying that he thought Asquith weak; that he would not join Campbell Bannerman, and that the split in the Liberal Party would be greater than ever.

January 7, 1902.

Lord Jersey told me that in July, before the war, he had said to the Queen that there would be no war, but Her Majesty shook her head, and said sadly she feared there would be.

At Lady Burghclere's place near Knole, I met, during what the Americans so vilely call a 'week-end party,' Mr. and Mrs. Humphry Ward—he the Art Critic of *The Times* and she, the now famous authoress.

Alfred Lyall, the poet and scholar, one of the most delightful of companions, was there, and in a horrid fog we walked to Knole.

On the 13th January I attended a great meeting at St. James's Hall, where Campbell Bannerman made a most excellent speech, tactful and straight. The audience showed great hostility to

Rosebery, and went so far as to hiss Asquith's name, which I was sorry for.

Lord Spencer also spoke, but when I went back with him to supper, I found him in low spirits.

To my extreme surprise I was told that Rosebery was annoyed at my attending the meeting, which I resented, as Lord Spencer was my proper leader.

Mrs. Asquith also wrote me a long letter, very bitter with Campbell Bannerman.

Before the week was over, I spent a few days with the Wenlocks at Escrick.

There was a play being acted in London called 'The Importance of being Earnest.' The King is said to have asked M. de Soveral whether he had seen it.

'No, sir,' he answered, 'but I have seen the importance of being Ernest Cassell'—who was a great financier, and a friend of the King's.

I ended the month, and began February with a horrid attack of the violent illness, Influenza.

People were talking a great deal at this time about Christian Science, and a strong advocate of it called at a friend's house, asking for her. The maid said: 'Oh! Ma'am, she's very ill.' 'Nonsense,' said the Scientist, 'she is not really ill, she only thinks she is.'

The next day the Scientist called again, and in answer to inquiries the maid said:

'Well, Ma'am, she *thinks* she is dead.'

Miss Hobhouse, who had written a great deal about the hardships of our Compounds in South Africa, wished to be photographed by Miss Arnold, and said she was either *the* or *that* Miss Hobhouse, according to people's opinions.

May 1902.

An old woman, who had lived all her life with children and grand-children innumerable, left alone in the end, was asked if she did not miss them:

'Yes,' she said, 'I misses 'em and I wants 'em, but I misses 'em more than I wants 'em.'

On returning to my flat on the night of June 20 I was much surprised at finding a letter from Lord Salisbury telling me that the King proposed to invest me with the Order of the Grand Cross of the Bath. How I wished that my wife had lived that we might

have taken pleasure together on this honour which I valued as coming direct from His Majesty, and had my dear wife been alive I should have valued it more.

Downing Street, S.W.
June 20, 1902.

Private.

Sir,—I have had the honour of receiving a command from the King to inform you that it is His Majesty's gracious intention to confer the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath upon you, on the occasion of His Majesty's approaching Coronation.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
SALISBURY.

The Right Honble. Sir Algernon West, K.C.B.

I was touched with the King's kindness; and now I have, most undeservedly, the two greatest honours that a commoner can possess.

In 1885 when I congratulated Lord Aberdare on becoming a G.C.B. he quoted Cicero as saying: 'Consideration is the veteran's compensation for the pleasures of youth and vigorous manhood.' And I admit that a G.C.B. does add somewhat to one's consideration!! But I do not agree with Cicero in thinking there is any compensation in growing old.

In September, Arthur Balfour wrote and asked me to take the Chair of a Committee to inquire into the Heralds' College. This I accepted.

Our investigations proved to be principally directed to the fees which recipients of Peerages and certain other honours were required to pay. H. Shand acted as Secretary of the Committee, and really did all the work, but I was struck by the modesty of the Duke of Norfolk who was quite content to accept my chairmanship, and was so helpful and considerate.

May 29.

I dined with the High Sheriff of Surrey—sat next to Mr. Pirrie,¹ who talked about the great shipping Combine, and Mr. Morgan's² facility for dealing quickly with business matters.

The whole combination was effected in two interviews of three-quarters of an hour each.

¹ Afterwards 1st Baron Pirrie, head of the great shipping firm, Harland and Wolff.

² Mr. J. Pierpoint Morgan, the American financier.

Sir Algernon was very anxious that the Coronation of King Edward might be signalised by the remission of some part of the sentences on prisoners. He received letters both from the King and the Queen expressing sympathy with the idea, but saying that they could take no active part in realising it. Mr. Herbert Gladstone (1st Viscount Gladstone) writes also sympathising but doubtful of the feasibility of the scheme.

Spoke to Lord Justice Vaughan Williams, who told me he agreed entirely with my views as to remission of sentences on Coronation Day.

Also spoke to the Lord Chief Justice, who also agreed, and said he would do what he could to effect it.

Lord Kelvin said he had just seen Edison and believed in his invention for lightening the weight of accumulators, which would have a great effect on locomotion.

I went on a visit to Evelyn Ashley at Broadlands, which interested me much as being the home of Lord Palmerston. I always thought Ashley's story of seeing the old man coming out of the house, and testing his strength by getting over an iron hurdle, very touching.

I tried to persuade the Duchess of Sutherland to use her influence with Lord Rosebery, in my attempt to get a remission of sentences on Coronation Day. She said she would write to Rosebery, and see Ruggles-Brise.¹ But Rosebery, of course, said it was not his business. Then I went to see Lady de Rothschild, who was keen about it, and dined afterwards at Lady Sassoon's, who also was equally keen in favour of my idea.

June 4, 1902.

On the way I met Ruggles-Brise, and begged him to give way. He said it had not been done at the Jubilee, and did not see how it could be managed now, but he was very friendly, and I promised not to make the subject public.

At dinner I sat between Arthur Balfour and Mrs. Crawshay. I told him of Chamberlain's saying at Waddesdon no man could be both great and good.

He asked me if I had notes of Mr. Gladstone's last Government, and I explained to him my position. He then talked of Private Secretaries, and said he followed Mr. Gladstone's practice of entire confidence. We talked of secrecy in official matters. He had

¹ Sir E. Ruggles-Brise, K.C.B., Chairman of Prison Commission, 1895.

² Daughter of Sir John and Lady Constance Leslie.

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never heard of Helps' 'Essays written in the intervals of business,' and rejoiced at hearing of a new book, which I sent to him.

Then Lady Sassoon started us off on my prison proposal. Arthur Balfour did not sympathise, for he thought remissions were only suited to barbarous nations when punishments were arbitrary, and remissions were the same. I said, that would do for a House of Commons argument, but would not hold water, and that Ruggles-Brise was the only obstacle, at which he rose and said—Ruggles-Brise's business was administration not policy. Asked me to send him my letter, which he promised to read.¹

On the 14th July Lord Salisbury retired, and Balfour succeeded him as Prime Minister, Ritchie taking Hicks Beach's place as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

After a visit to Escrick I returned to London, and on the

8th August, I, with Harry Keppel,² attended at Buckingham Palace for our Investitures: The Order of Merit in his case, the G.C.B. in mine.

The King said how glad he was to bestow the G.C.B. on me.

Although I know how odious comparisons are, I could not help feeling the enormous difference between the King's gracious manner and that of the late Queen's, who went through the ceremony of my two previous Investitures without a word or even a smile.

April 1903.

I met at Moberly Bell's house M. Marconi, the inventor of wireless telegraphy, who told me that messages crossed the Atlantic at the rate of 186,000 miles a second,³ but that it would take quite ten years or more to supplant wire telegraphy altogether. He seemed singularly modest, and ready to talk to an ignoramus like myself.

One night when I was dining with Howard Whitbread at Brooks's, we saw, at another table, an old man, Mr. W. Strachey, who was having his breakfast, and we found from the waiter that he did not get up till 6 P.M. He had breakfast at 9 P.M., stayed till the Club shut, then went to some later Club and dined at 2 A.M. How unconventional!

My old and dear friend, Lady Spencer, died after a long illness. Poor Spencer! All our friends dying, and one can only pray for a good deliverance, which Newman said we might.

¹ Sir Algernon gained much sympathy with his idea, but it was not realised.

² The aged admiral.

³ An actual fact; so do messages by wire.

On the 23rd June I was asked, but only after a protest on account of my age consented, to join the Free Trade Union, with the objects of which I was in the fullest sympathy. It was started to combat the heretical financial campaign of Chamberlain. When he came back with the Veldt fever upon him and found the Government damaged by his colleagues' blunders it was supposed that he wished to draw attention from them, and, as Benn¹ said, it reminded him of a jingo clergyman, who nailed up the 'Union Jack' on the walls of his church, and asked the children what it was there for.

'Please, sir, to 'ide the dirt!'

When paying a delightful visit at Lady Carrington's at Dawes Hill, I saw Hughenden for the first time, and thought it very tawdry, and the grave still tawdrier, and unworthy of so remarkable a man.

I met Miss Brooke Hunt at Busbridge,² a place taken by the Wentworth Beaumonts, where I had stayed with the Ramsdens in old days. She had been a nurse in S. Africa, and told us two interesting stories :

She was allowed a servant when there to wait on her, the man first assigned being unfit for active service. On his recovery he had to join his regiment, and a Corporal of the Life Guards besought her for the place. He told her he had lived a notoriously evil life and committed all the crimes forbidden by the Ten Commandments, except murder ; that he knew he was going to die soon, naming a date, and winding up by saying how much he would like to live the short remainder of his life in peace and quiet. He proved an excellent servant, but was ordered, later on, to accompany a remount party. She went to the Commanding Officer, who telegraphed to the proper quarter for authority to permit the man to remain with her till she went up to Pretoria, which was to be in the course of a few days. No answer to this was received, so he had to go. Thanking her for all she had done, he said he knew 'fate was too strong' for him ; that he would be killed on the date he had mentioned, and that when it occurred he would be riding a bay horse, and 'it was all right.' Subsequently she found out that the wires had been cut and that the Commanding Officer's telegram did not reach its destination in time to stop his return. When she reached Pretoria, she met a man who had been with the Corporal. He told her that he had been killed when riding a bay horse, and that he had

¹ Mr. W. Wedgwood Benn, M.P., Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

² Busbridge Park, near Godalming.

sent a message to her saying : ' Fate was too strong—but it was all right.'

She told us, too, of a boy in hospital with enteric, returned in the list as 'dangerously ill,' who said to the doctor : ' I am so much better, could I not relieve my people by telegraphing to them ? ' ' Certainly,' said the doctor ; ' write out your telegram and put it by your bedside.' When the Nurse came she found the boy asleep and the proposed telegram near by saying : ' —, No. —, died in Hospital such-and-such a date.' She took it away and showed it to the doctor, but they both agreed to ignore it—the boy being light-headed when it was written—and the doctor telegraphed that he was out of danger. He continued to improve, but on the date mentioned in the boy's telegram he was sitting up eating his luncheon, when he fell dead.

How strange and unaccountable are such stories !

All this time the Tariff Reform scare was raging, and the *Daily Mail* suddenly completed a *volte-face*—advocating protection, though Harmsworth had said to me it would never come to pass.

A. Spender, the brilliant editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, told me that Harmsworth had written to Rosebery saying that, if he would come to the front and take a certain line, he would give him the support of his newspapers.

The first two letters remained unanswered ; to the third a reply came from Lord Rosebery to the effect that he had never had his policy dictated to him by journalists, and that he would not commence now.

Harmsworth then wrote to Chamberlain and told him that if he would say certain things at his next meeting, he (Harmsworth) would support him. Chamberlain did say what was proposed, and the papers duly performed their *volte-face*.

November 21, 1903.

Spender asked him ' How will it suit you to have paper taxed ? ' He said ' It won't be taxed.'

September 12, 1903.

George Russell told me the Duchess of Albany had shown him the Duke's correspondence. The Duke had been very anxious to be Permanent Foreign Secretary, and the correspondence between him and Disraeli on the subject was extremely interesting. Then he had wished to be an Australian Governor, foreseeing that there would some day be a Governor-General for an United Australia. The Queen had refused to make him a Peer, but Disraeli persuaded

her to do so, telling the Duke that the Queen's reluctance was due to a fear that it would lead to his going up to London more often than his health would stand. Disraeli took it on himself to say that this should not occur.

The Queen never forgave Lord Granville his opposition to her being created 'Empress'; and he was not invited again under her roof. He had been in the habit of sending her a bouquet at the New Year, and was troubled as to how he should act.

Count Münster, at the Dowager Empress of Germany's request, had asked Lord Granville to dinner. The Queen begged him not to do so. He gave an evasive answer, and later on Lady Ely came and said the Queen wished to see him at the door of her room, when she said: 'I do not think you were clear in promising me to put off Lord Granville.' Münster said he was placed in a position of great difficulty in his ambassadorial position, as well as having regard to his duty to Her Majesty, to his Queen and himself; but if the Queen would give him her orders in writing he would obey. She said she would consider it, and early in the morning she sent Lady Ely to him with a message to come to her, when she told him that perhaps he had best let the invitation stand.

For six years I had been the Deputy Governor of the Union Bank of London, but recently we had amalgamated Smith Payne's and Prescott's and I made up my mind to resign that position. I did, I think, wisely in the face of so many skilled Bankers—whereas I had only come in at the eleventh hour.

[Sir Felix Schuster wrote Sir Algernon a letter on his retirement, expressive of much regret and of very high appreciation of his services.]

At this time I was asked by my old friends, Lord Avebury and Sir Charles Fremantle, to be a member of the Council of Foreign Bondholders, which I looked on as a great compliment.

Shortly after taking my seat at the Council I complained to an old and distinguished colleague that I felt the fees paid to me were in excess of the work I did, and his answer was wise as well as agreeable, for he said:

'Pray understand that it is not for the work that you do, but for the work that you have done, that you are chosen a member of Council.'

THE ESCAPE.

BY WINIFRED F. PECK.

I.

'WELL, it was a wonderful meeting!' Mrs. Sinclair walked into the drawing-room, smiling, definite, turning on the lights till they wholly engulfed the dim comfort of the armchair and solitary lamp where Mortimer Dare had entrenched himself with books and cigars. 'You missed a great deal!'

Mortimer smiled absently. Mrs. Sinclair was, he reflected, just the person who would provide you with that formula which originated certainly in envy for the joys of the stay-at-home.

'No, he didn't miss much, and I didn't miss him. I've got his conscience money.' The little Bishop of Tamilly followed Mrs. Sinclair, and Mortimer regretfully put down his books. No one could amuse himself with the *Mimes* in the presence of that vigorous, alert personality. 'An Anglican gadfly,' Mortimer had called him, after one of his denunciations of the slackness of the age, 'and I only endure your stings because of the sad accident which placed our beds next to each other in our private school.'

'You are the only missionary I ever met,' he said now, adjusting his horn-rimmed glasses, 'candid enough to say it was money and not prayers you wanted.'

'To pay is to pray,' said the Bishop cheerfully. 'At least, if you want as many schools and hospitals as I do.'

'And the Bishop did ask our prayers,' put in Mrs. Sinclair reproachfully. 'I wish you'd heard Hugh too, Mr. Dare. His speech was really splendid. The Duke of Aberlady came up afterwards specially to say so!'

Hugh Sinclair turned abruptly from the group at his wife's words with perceptible irritation. From a tray in the background he offered drinks, while his wife reproachfully suggested cocoa.

'Whisky for me,' said the Bishop cheerfully.

'Then I'll go to bed, I think. I'm so tired. You won't be too late, will you, Hugh?'

Mortimer opened the door and Mrs. Sinclair collected furs and gloves with a little gentle martyrdom in her air. Then she walked out, her smiling complacency as a successful hostess and the wife of a rising young clergyman just a little dimmed by her doubt

as to how far Mortimer accepted her own estimate of herself. Long ago she had branded her husband's friend as cynical, and there was perhaps something of that quality in Mortimer's reflection that there was some chance of finding the real Hugh at last in her absence. If so, he was disappointed, for Hugh still stood, taut and absent-minded, by the fire, though the Bishop for once had relaxed into ease and serenity in an arm-chair.

'You're a lucky man!' he was saying to the Bishop abruptly.

'Not at all,' smiled the Bishop. 'I have to wear gaiters at home!'

'In spite of them you are!' Hugh reiterated. 'How on earth do you manage to be so sure of yourself?'

'Oh well!' the Bishop looked up quickly. 'I've only made up my mind on one subject in the world if it comes to that! About thirty years ago I decided that the only thing worth doing in the world was the saving of individual souls. I tried Mortimer's sort and it was too tough a job for me: I don't like duchesses and charwomen as you do. There only remained the other sort of heathen, the obvious heathen abroad. You've more chance there and less interference. So there you are—at least here I am!'

'It all rests, however,' put in Mortimer, 'on the hypothesis that there are such things as souls.'

'Well, there obviously are,' retorted the Bishop, 'unless they've been mislaid in a Greek lexicon. But I'm not going to waste time arguing with you. Sit down, Hugh, and let him tell us who's going head of the river this year.'

'I'm afraid I can't,' said Hugh abruptly, 'I've a few letters I must write. No, you stay here! I'll go off to my own den. Good night!'

The two men, left together, sat in silence for a few minutes, and then the Bishop poked the fire rather violently.

'I disapprove intensely,' he said, 'of talking about a man in his own house, but I'm going North to-morrow and may not see you again. Will you kindly tell me what's wrong with Hugh Sinclair?'

'Wrong—oh, well, nothing that I know of,' temporised Mortimer.

'Rubbish,' said the Bishop. 'My dear fellow, you know how I've loved the boy since he was under me at Eton and in the Trinity days afterwards. I'm not one of the Sherlock Holmes ecclesiastics and I've no time here to nose things out for myself. But I can see the boy's going to pieces and I want to know what's the matter.'

He made an excellent speech to-night: he's keen on his work, got a pretty wife and an extraordinarily well-managed home. What's the matter with him?—and don't put it in Greek.'

'A French *cliché* would be more obvious!' replied Mortimer. 'But don't let your polygamous Hindu customs lead you to imagine you must search for another woman. And don't think I've any special case against Mrs. Sinclair, though I don't like her. Still, speaking as a bachelor to a celibate, I may say this: have you ever noticed how often a saint is chained in holy wedlock to a minx? I can never make up my mind if it's the saint who develops the minx or *vice versa*. And of course in this case Mrs. Sinclair is not the latter, in any ordinary conception of the word.'

'Nor is Hugh exactly ready for canonisation,' put in the Bishop.

'Oh no, he's on the right side of the Calendar as yet! But you can see as clearly as I do that he's the potentialities about him. His soul, as you'd call it, is so terribly thin-skinned; he's abnormally sensitive and subject to impressions, experiences, mystic influences, or whatever the right phrase is.'

'I never thought that of him in old days,' said the Bishop.

'It was true enough then all the same, if it was dormant. You knew him as the typical product of an English country home, smothered in wisteria and traditions, destined for the Church because the third son of the Sinclairs always had been. Oxford for him wasn't a home of lost causes or acquired philosophies, but a four years' Arcadia in his college boat and the ark of Mother Church at Cowley. Under your influence he sailed through a theological college and was ordained without one spiritual wound, I imagine, to test his quality. Then came the war—you didn't see him during those years, and I only superficially, but when we went off to fish in the Highlands together, in the June of 1919, I saw what had happened. Imagine St. Sebastian surviving his martyrdom and unable to pluck out his arrows! That was his frame of mind! His vision of sin, or whatever you like to call it, had pierced all his defences. We talked the sun down—a hard job, mind you, in Glenarrol in June—night after night. It seemed to me an even chance whether he'd become a Trappist or a haunter of night-clubs or a pagan philosopher in a tub on Ben Arrol. He was in that frame of mind when he met Mrs. Sinclair, Mrs. Munro as she was then, or rather when Mrs. Munro met him.'

'What's the difference?'

'My dear Bishop, have you ever watched your most promising

dusky catechumen taken in hand by a designing priestess ? If so, you'll realise how hideously obvious feminine wiles become to the impartial onlooker ! When we'd been fishing the Arrol water for three days Mrs. Munro appeared on the opposite bank with a rod. Her line got entangled with Hugh's round an alder bush, and it was only I who noticed that she'd omitted to put any cast on it and knew no more of fishing than I do of theology. It wasn't long before we were invited to her father's manse. Once in Chelsea I met a model who sat successively to a Royal Academician and an advanced Cubist. "Law, the difference ! You'd have thought I was two people !" she said, and I used to remember her as I watched the funeral of Hugh's bachelordom. Hugh saw a pretty, pathetic little war-widow, devoted daughter of a widowed old minister, prop of his lonely old age, companion of his saintly joys and sorrows. I saw a rather grasping, self-indulgent old man, whose happy, slovenly solitude had been invaded by a managing young woman. I don't know who the first husband was, but on the strength of her marriage she'd got to London and enjoyed a job in the Civil Service. If the war hadn't ended she'd have been Secretary for Scotland I expect—she's damnably efficient. The setting of the scene was perfect of course, a little white manse with honeysuckle and white briar-roses under the hills, and a pathetic little widow, her white face crowned by sunny golden hair, as the magazine stories say. That's how Hugh saw her. Personally I always distrust that type of red hair, and I can promise that she'll have a fine nut-cracker profile when she's older. It may be spite, for she was too much for me. She's the sort of woman who always has fate on her side. Just when I thought I was going to get Hugh away her old father succumbed suddenly to a heart-attack. Mind you, I don't want the body exhumed, or consider her responsible. She merely used the situation by sending for Hugh. He went off at once and I sat down to compose an ode to a Lost Friend. When Hugh came back his heart-searchings were all over. He was happily reunited to the God who'd made Mrs. Munro, to the Church which had a family living waiting for him by this time, and, of course, incidentally, engaged to the lady.'

'If,' said the Bishop thoughtfully, after a pause, 'I were about to indulge in a love affair, I doubt if I should engage you as my chronicler, Mortimer. The anti-feminist bias is a little too strong ! Let us suppose that Mrs. Munro made—shall we say—most of the

running. That's been done before, but the result is often happy, I imagine. What have you against her as Hugh's wife ?'

' Nothing to produce in any court, I assure you ! By every worldly standard she's an excellent wife. Of course, it's obvious that anyone who manages life to suit herself isn't strictly truthful. I don't know how far Hugh realises that. It's a tragedy if he does, as our social as well as our moral code rebels against it. What he does obviously suffer from is a sort of physical and moral suffocation. She's made up her mind that he's to be supremely comfortable and supremely successful in her own way. Down in their Somersetshire rectory she folded him up in layers of county society and episcopal approval, till, so I imagine, he burst through them and escaped in a struggle for spiritual existence. He told me he meant to come and work in an obscure London curacy to make his soul. How Mrs. Sinclair wangled him into Pimlico I don't know. She looks persistently West and never allows him to look East, except in the Creed of course, as his Church has advanced views. She gets to know all the right people and manoeuvres him into success, while all the time his poor, thin-skinned soul is pierced by the failures and controversies round him. He's coquetting with Rome, I believe, attracted no doubt by a celibate priesthood. In short, it's Don Quixote married to Becky Sharp, that's my diagnosis. What do you make of it ?'

The Bishop only shook his head, and after a pause the conversation drifted away. He could demand but could not exchange confidences. Not to Mortimer could he explain the insight he received from him into the meaning of Hugh's impulsive, boyish utterance to himself that evening, as they stood at the entrance of the Albert Hall, waiting for Mrs. Sinclair to free herself from her conversation with her influential friends.

' I say, Bishop, do you think—if I could get out of all this—that you could take me out to work with you in Tamily ? ' The request which had so startled him was clear enough now. Tamily represented to Hugh not so much a field of new enterprise as a miraculous avenue of escape.

II.

' Myra, I want to talk to you about something. Would you mind saying you're not at home to anyone now ? '

Myra Sinclair was moving about her drawing-room with what Mortimer described as her cat-like tread. She had made the

tea, and while she let it stand she was pursuing her little home duties of placing a vase of white narcissus under a Madonna, and re-arranging her tray of calling cards so as to accord the Duke of Aberlady his usual precedence.

'Very well!' Myra raised her eyebrows. 'Mary, will you please say I am not at home this afternoon, and, Mary, I wish to say that when I was looking over the spare-room this afternoon I found a lot of tobacco ash in one of the drawers Mr. Dare used. You must remember to dust everything and put in fresh paper if necessary. Don't let me have to speak of this again.'

Myra was a practical woman. Having got rid of her slight irritation by scolding the maid and implying to her husband that the habits of his bachelor friends were a cross to her house-loving spirit, she sat down with a smile for Hugh. She had no desire for a private conversation, as she recognised, during the last few days, from his restlessness and absent-mindedness, that he was probably on the verge of one of those tiresome spiritual crises she diagnosed to herself as liver; and she did very much enjoy having visitors ushered into the low, white-panelled room, so gay with chintz and Persian rugs, so restrained in the austerity of its few pieces of choice furniture and framed majestic Madonnas. In a mirror she saw herself by the tea-table. She was a tall, slender woman, and beautiful as was her red hair, it was, she considered, the nose and chin, so rudely termed nut-cracker by her enemies, which gave the air of greatest distinction to her features. The mirror reflected Hugh as well, with the thin, ascetic face and tall, stooping figure exactly suited to her ideal of a well-born cleric. 'Such a distinguished-looking couple, my dear,' the old Duchess of Aberlady wheezed once, and it was the compliment which Myra loved best to recall of any in her life. She had not the imagination to realise that the strained, self-tortured look in his eyes was in strange contrast to the quick, managing directness of her own, that she was looking at herself as one set in so fitting a stage that she naturally required an audience, while Hugh's looked, like the Lady of Shalott's, into a world of shadows of which he was weary. She merely relinquished her audience with a sigh and prepared herself for some fresh obstacle in the path of success she had appointed for her husband.

'How nice to have a cosy tea-time talk before the Bishop comes,' she said brightly.

'I must talk to you first!' Hugh pushed away his cup untasted.

'I've been trying to for days. Myra ! I want to ask you. Would you mind very much if we left all this ?'

'Oh, Hugh !' Myra sat up, her eyes alight. 'Is it—is it—the Deanery ? Mr. Kemp-Peacey told me that Lord Egham had recommended you very strongly, but I hardly dared to hope——'

'No, no !' Hugh did not disguise his impatience. 'Put all ideas of promotion out of your head, Myra ! The fact is, that I've been worried, badly worried lately, not with my work here but my own inadequacy for it. Some people can live this easy, successful life without being demoralised by it, but I can't. "Jeshurun waxed fat"—Mortimer said that once I remember. And the position of affairs in the Church tortures me—controversies, uncertainties, conflicting claims ! I want to go off with the Bishop to Tamilly, for a time, at any rate !——'

'Hugh !' Myra bore the blow upright and unflinching. 'Will you please tell me this. How have I failed you as a wife ?'

Hugh walked up and down the room feverishly. It was so wrong, so selfish, to inflict such a blow on his wife and feel no pity but only bitter annoyance, because, as he had foreseen, she had put herself at once into the forefront of the picture. When love does not change to kindness it turns to a bitterness unthinkable to a man of Hugh's temperament in any other relation of life.

'It's not you !' he guarded his voice carefully ; 'not you at all.'

'I've tried to do my best for you,' said Myra. 'You know what a blow to me it was when you came to me at Water Orchard and said just the same thing. You know how obediently I left our dear rectory and the garden and all your people, who were so good to me and sorry for me, and followed you into the wilderness. You know how I've tried to help you ever since we came here, how I've got to know all the right people and made a little circle which can appreciate you. What fault do you find with me now ?'

For one brief moment Hugh was tempted, as we all are at times, to speak out of his innermost feelings those truths which make relationships impossible. 'You know,' he longed to say, 'that again and again I've found you out in the mean, petty lies which revolt me to the soul, in detestable hypocrisies. I never said anything when you sent for the furniture from the Manse, as you said, and instead of a load of Victorian rubbish there came those exquisite bits of Chippendale which encouraged my family to believe your tales of your father's ancestors. I knew you were lying and that you'd exchanged your horrors for them at some dealer's. It didn't

matter much, I suppose, but it was the first time I found you out. I know you never gave me the message from that dying boy, because we were going to dine with the Somersethires, that night at Water Orchard, though you protested it had only slipped your memory. I know that when I determined to leave Water Orchard and make my soul in London, you schemed and plotted till you got me to the outskirts of Belgravia instead of the East End. I know you persuaded my people to give us that hateful thousand a year which makes it possible for you to worm your way into the society you long for. I know how you intrigue to make me popular and known, how you thrust me amongst the people I've no use for and keep me from the work I like, how you're fighting to dominate my life and soul. I know it all, and because of it my life's intolerable.' All these thoughts rushed through Hugh's mind in a wave of something like hatred, the hatred of the captured for the jailer, but it spent itself only to find expression in a mere reiteration of his former words :

' I want to go somewhere where I can work without society, without the torment of considering the claims of our Church as against other Churches. I want to go out to India with the Bishop.'

Myra sat silent for a few minutes, her head bowed on her hands. Through her mind too passed pictures not less pathetic, if infinitely less noble, of her long struggles with life for success, for escape from poverty and insignificance in the Highlands, for Hugh himself and that success for Hugh, as her husband, for which she had planned so many campaigns. Against them all she saw only at first poverty, loneliness, and social exile. Then, like a great general, she shifted her field of manœuvres valiantly : India, influence with the Viceroy through Lord Egham ; the brilliant missionary and his wife as a force in Anglo-Indian society ; Hugh's promotion, Hugh a Bishop in India, a Bishop at home, an Archbishop at last—a worn and faded but still exquisitely beautiful wife by his side, walking on Archiepiscopal lawns by the side of some imaginary Duke : ' Ah yes,' she was saying, ' it was dreadful when the call came, but Hugh knew that he could rely on me ! ' She stretched out her hand for the teapot and filled up her cup composedly.

' Of course, Hugh,' she said, ' if you feel like this you must go. But of course I shall come with you. Don't speak to me about the climate : marriage vows are not bounded by latitude and longitude ! '

It is not infrequently that in moments of crisis we manufacture

a phrase which satisfies us. Myra had found hers, to reproduce it that evening for the benefit of the Bishop.

There are few more pathetic sights in the world than that of really clever, determined, yet unpractical men in the hands of a managing woman : neither Hugh, nor the Bishop, when he arrived, had any chance of reaching any private understanding. It was of no use for the Bishop, inspired by memories of his talk with Mortimer, to point out that the climate was bad and the loneliness terrible for women. Myra's phrase covered all that : ' and besides I could take up simple medical work and teach the women in the Rajah's Court,' she said brightly. A dim vision of Mrs. Sinclair as pre-eminent consultant in the North-West Provinces, or leading lady of the Rajah's Court, inspired the Bishop with sudden humorous fears. After all, apart from Hugh's feelings, what a power such a woman might be ! It was impossible to imagine Buddha or Mahammed themselves standing up against her smiling, superior certainties, and before her surely centuries of heathen tradition would shrink away. It is true that the Bishop had small desire to witness these miracles at close quarters, even if Hugh could be reconciled, and very clearly he couldn't. His part in the conversation seemed unimportant enough. There was no enthusiasm in him now, no conviction. When the Bishop spoke to him of the red tape of missionary regulations, of the disadvantages of his age and health, and the difficulty in changing his career and undertaking new work and languages, it was Myra who replied with bright confidence and Hugh who found no replies. In view also of her radiant self-sacrifice and perfect agreement with her husband's plans Myra saw no reason to leave the two men together for a minute, and if it had not been for two minutes at the front door the Bishop would have left the house bewildered.

' You're really going to make the offer ? ' he asked Hugh, as he took down his overcoat.

' Yes, I must ! ' Hugh glanced at the half-open drawing-room door. ' I must get away from all this or leave the Church altogether. It doesn't sound as if I'd be of much use to you, but if I could get a fresh start and really hard work, if I could leave everything here behind, I might find everything which matters again.'

' Your wife's quite determined ? ' asked the Bishop inconsequently.

' I'm afraid so,' said Hugh. ' I mean, of course, in view of her health.'

' If the Medical Board refuses her, do you mean to go without

her ? ' The Bishop spoke abruptly : that seemed to him the crux of the whole matter.

' I suppose it'll be for her to decide,' said Hugh miserably, and the two men parted on that, knowing only too well the probable decision of that dominant personality behind the half-open door. The celibate Bishop walked away, his head held high in gratitude for his own contrasting lot.

There is no more common consolation for those distressed in mind or body than to fix upon some definite crisis in the future as an anodyne for all their sorrows. The day upon which the Missionary Board should definitely accept his offer came to stand to Hugh for all that an operation does to a nervous patient : when once that was over, pain and anxiety would matter nothing. Because of that crisis in the future it was just possible to bear his drawing-room full of protesting friends, aggrieved relatives, a heroic wife, his little study so full of self-questionings and mental torture that they came to represent to him nothing but a cage. If he could receive his orders at last to go, if by some happy accident he might, above all, start off alone, he could endure the gilded wires for a little longer yet.

It was late one evening when he returned home, almost unconscious of the bitter rain of the dark April evening, and hurried into the drawing-room. The crisis was past, the operation over, and in the shock of the announcement he felt so uplifted and happy that he wished at once to share his relief.

' Myra ! ' he called, entering the drawing-room. ' It's all right. They've accepted me ! '

And at that he paused, regarding the room in surprise. Myra, as usual, was not alone, but the stranger seated opposite her was very different from anyone in Myra's circle of carefully-chosen friends. There are duchesses who look like farmers' wives, but there are also farmers' wives who can never look like duchesses, and the newcomer belonged to their class. Even as Hugh realised the elusive likeness between his elegant wife and the monumental figure in rusty black and awe-inspiring bonnet who surveyed the tea-table, cup in hand, handkerchief on her knee, diffusing around her a faint odour of camphor and peppermint, he guessed with sudden amusement that Myra entertained a relative.

' And so this ! ' said the stranger, glancing up slowly and impressively, ' so this is the young man who's set on rinning awa' from ye, Maggie ! '

' Hugh ! ' Myra rose, as the fatally appropriate greeting was

made. 'This is Aunt Alexandria, my father's sister, who's come to look us up.' She had blanched a little as her aunt indulged in the name of her early days, but on the whole she bore up bravely.

'Aye, Maggie wrote and told me of your plans, and I thought I'd come and look ye up. It's not every day ye meet a man who prefers a sair job to a soft, forbye I'd a bit business of my own which I needna trouble ye with.'

'I hope you're staying with us for a little, Aunt Alexandria,' said Hugh cheerfully. After he had, as it were, got the perspective of the old lady's enormous figure and many creased chins he felt a liking at once for her shrewd lips and kind, twinkling eyes. Nor had he any desire at the moment for private conversations with Myra.

'No, though I thank you kindly. I've the half of my excursion ticket to use to-night, and Maggie's best bed's awa to the mender. Dinna fash yersel,' added the old lady, seeing Hugh wince at his wife's obvious falsehood. 'I'll just take my supper with ye and be off to Euston after. And I'll be glad if ye don't feel me in the way and speak out all your news. Who's been accepting ye ?'

'The Missionary Board !' said Hugh, with boyish excitement. 'Myra, how soon could you be ready to start ? We have a good deal to plan, you see, Aunt Alexandria !'

'I don't know,' said Myra. 'I'm afraid—Hugh, I'd better speak out at once so that you mayn't have any false hopes. It's no good your planning any more. I've been to see the doctors, and they say my health won't stand it. I fought hard against their decision, but they were unanimous. No, don't be alarmed ! It's no organic disease, but they say my heart couldn't stand the climate or the exertion. I was just going to tell Aunt Alexandria when you came in.'

'It'll be the stomach likely,' said Aunt Alexandria placidly. 'Your mother's folk were aye weak in the wame.'

Hugh was struck dumb for a moment. His wife's attitude utterly disconcerted him. For the last fortnight she had not been herself in any way, and her passion for going out to India, for finding there, as it seemed to him, an escape, like himself, though from difficulties he could not surmise, far greater than his. Now, with Aunt Alexandria's arrival, something had changed her. It was with hardly-disguised triumph she announced the defeat of the Indian scheme, the total defeat, unless indeed the impossibility of her sharing his schemes opened up for him a new avenue of a solitary and wonderful escape.

'It's heart-breaking to disappoint you !' Myra was quick to barricade the pathway. 'But it seems as if this were the end of Tamilly.'

'Unless yer man went without ye, Maggie,' put in Aunt Alexandria suddenly. 'He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar, ye ken.'

'It wouldn't be possible to settle anything in a hurry,' temporised Hugh. To one whose family had for generations been in the habit of facing their crises behind locked doors, shut off from the world in their Somersetshire library, the discussion of any plans before a stranger seemed impossible. But to a wife and aunt, whose forebears had thrashed out every question, however confidential, in a farm kitchen, the need for privacy was quite outweighed by the urgency of the problem.

'But ye'll have no too much time for deliberation,' said the old lady firmly.

'Well, of course, if it were possible,' said Hugh, driven into the open, 'I'd like to go out for a bit. You know what it means to me, Myra.'

'Hugh !' Myra's cry of surprise and indignation was in a very different key from her usual tones. 'You couldn't leave me ! My health !'

'Indeed, Maggie, naething would do ye so much good as a quiet life and early hours for a bittie,' put in Myra's aunt. 'It's no to be expected a body with a poor digestion could put up with a' your gallivanting.'

'Hugh, you can't mean it !' Myra ignored her aunt's unflattering diagnosis.

'It means so much to me,' repeated Hugh forlornly.

'And what,' pursued Aunt Alexandria, merciless and self-appointed arbiter of the Sinclair destinies—'what would it be meaning to you exactly ?'

'It's very hard to explain.' Hugh was conscious of a not unsympathetic audience. 'I can only say I feel this trivial life here disastrous. Here at home Christianity is obscured by the Church, or rather the Churches, and their conflicting claims. It's like fighting in a tournament where the issue's quite unimportant and confused by all sorts of conflicting and arbitrary rule. In the Mission Field I think one would find the devil fighting against God, an open battle where one's duty is clear. I'm afraid I'm not clear, but—but I want to get away.'

Aunt Alexandria nodded her head slowly. 'Aye,' she said, 'there's hens that'll take kindly to a china egg, and ither that canna settle near them. I expect ye've no liking for china eggs, Mr. Sinclair.'

'We could exchange this parish and go to a really poor one,' suggested Myra.

Hugh's eyes sought the fire. If he had looked at Myra he must surely have broken out in speech: 'You'd advertise my sacrifice, collect a following from your friends, get my sermons into the papers, force me on to platforms—it would be the same wretched story again!' He took refuge in silence, broken at last by Aunt Alexandria.

'Whither,' said the old lady energetically, but cryptically—'whither shall I go then from thy presence?'

'If I don't go to Tamilly'—the weight of Hugh's misery made him break yet another silence with irrepressible despair—'I shall leave the Church—this Church. I shall have to do that, and take to journalism or writing of some kind for a living.'

Dinner was announced and confidences at an end. Aunt Alexandria had the last word as she rose heavily.

'Fine do I ken what ye'll do, Hugh. When once a body begins to shilly-shally backwards and forwards, it's aye backwards he goes in the end. Dinna heed Myra either. She was aye one that lookit to the moon, so it canna be helped if shelichts on a midden. Gang yer ain gait, and I'll be your friend.'

Aunt Alexandria was right as usual, if fault might be found in her sentiments by an ardent Catholic. To those swayed by doubts there can be no refuge but in certainty, no spiritual home but one where questioning is unknown. Three months later Hugh Sinclair was received into the Church of Rome. 'It's an age of conversion,' said Mortimer bitterly, when he heard the news. 'On every side our friends—like our houses—are being converted into flats.'

III.

It was a year before Miss Alexandria Ross descended upon London again. Not for a moment does this imply that the interval seemed to her a short one. Her first visit had been so much in the nature of a miracle that its repetition was nearly incredible. But the sense of kinship and love of interference, those two dominating principles of her race, led her valiantly to brave the terrors of the

South and visit her niece again. It was her vast person, seated by the fire in the little study, which faced Mortimer Dare as he entered the room. In some way that homely form, with keen eyes and clicking knitting-needles, obscured a little the unnatural tidiness and desolation of Hugh's room, bereft of its owner, and almost entirely obscured that of a little, marvellously elegant lady, seated by the telephone. So restless was Lady Bain that no acquaintance carried away an impression of anything but black eyes, black onyx beads and black, shining shoes. In the presence of Miss Ross she seemed Lilliputian.

'Ye'll have come to ask after Mr. Sinclair?' was Miss Ross's greeting.

'Yes, I have—he's almost my oldest friend. I've only just got back to England and heard of his terrible illness. How is he? What do the doctors say? Is there any hope?'

'Why yes, indeed,' said Miss Ross heartily. 'I came a week ago when Maggie Sinclair, that's my niece, was in desperation, and he's far and away better now.'

'But it's all terrible!' broke in Lady Bain, unused to so long a silence in any conversation. 'Quite, quite terrible for poor Myra! The doctors are here now and we're waiting for their verdict. They say the immediate danger's over, but they've said nothing of the future. Poor Myra, poor darling Myra!'

'It's poor Hugh as well, I'm thinking,' remarked Miss Ross drily. The eyes of the old lady and the middle-aged man met, and each of them realised in that moment the sympathy which exists between the hard-headed and soft-hearted of every type and class. 'Will ye tell me, Mr. Dare, for I've no seen Hugh for a year and I like the lad fine, what's the cause of all this? Maggie's been too fashed to tell me.'

'It's been coming on for some time I think.' Mortimer found himself speaking with curious unreserve to the old lady. 'It began when he left the Church. He'd a bad time you know, Miss Ross. He lost his father just as he gave up the Church and his elder brother refused to continue his allowance, so he had to face life on a few hundreds a year. He took to his pen, as they say, and the pen failed him. People didn't want to read, or anyhow to pay, for what he wrote. Mrs. Sinclair very bravely went into a millinery business—'

'With me,' burst in Lady Bain—

... 'and so,' pursued Mortimer, 'kept things going. She's

made a success of it, but all the same Hugh couldn't stand his own failure, and before I went abroad I saw he was on the verge of a collapse.'

'Aye, it would be hard to live with Maggie under the circumstances,' reflected Miss Ross uncompromisingly.

'You've not done Myra justice, Mr. Dare!' Lady Bain would be denied the lead no longer. 'You've told Hugh's difficulties but you don't say enough of Myra's heroism. Think of the months she spent in agonising uncertainty as to whether she should follow her husband's example or not! The biggest Roman people made a dead set at her—she went to Dacres and Stone itself for week-ends and the Duke himself talked to her.'

'Fine would Maggie enjoy that,' said the pitiless Miss Ross.

'Yet she stood firm to her own Church in spite of everything!'

'Aye, you'd never get Maggie to the Confessional,' reflected Maggie's aunt.

'Then think!'—Lady Bain was not, fortunately, one of those rare people who listen to what others are saying—'Think of the long months of drudgery in a little shop learning the business!—how hard she worked for her husband's sake no one but myself will ever know, and so utterly against the grain to a spiritual nature like hers.'

'I'd no be sure of that,' said Miss Ross. 'Maggie was aye a great hand with ribbons and fal-lals. And she'd like fine telling great folks what they ought to wear, as I hear your grand dress-maker bodies do. No, I'd no be too sorry for her over that.'

Mortimer sat forward in his chair appreciatively—Miss Ross seemed to him indeed a woman in a thousand—while Lady Bain pursued her tale.

'He's been living on her in a way and she's never complained. Just once she said to me with her pathetic smile, 'My fingers must pay for his brain!'

'Aye, I can hear her saying that,' said Miss Ross—'but do ye no' use a sewing-machine?'

'And now, now, when we've this tremendous opening in America Mr. Sinclair has collapsed altogether. I don't know if you realised that she and I had just determined to go out to New York to start a branch of my business there. With all my connections we're certain of success. It would mean a year's absence of course, but she'd practically persuaded Mr. Sinclair to come out too and get a little lecturing and writing in New York—we feel we could interest

American Catholics in his position—and now ! What's she to do ? It's hard for her to leave her husband like this, but to refuse is to turn her back on success. And after all this is the third time he's failed her, you know that as well as I do. He's broken up her life twice before and if she weren't an angel of charity—'

'It'll be a great comfort to her, your seeing things through her eyes,' said Miss Ross drily.

'If it's the immediate future that's the difficulty,' said Mortimer, 'I've written already to suggest taking Hugh off with me for a cruise, but it would be on a bachelor friend's yacht without Mrs. Sinclair, and it could only last for the Long Vacation I fear.'

'Maggie would be jealous of that.' Miss Ross stated the fact simply. 'And ye see for so short a time it's neither here or there. No, I've offered her already to take her and her husband back with me to Stromore. There's her Uncle Tom's wee house next mine standing empty and I'd put them into it gladly enough. But ye see Maggie won't come back to Stromore without she's driven to it—she's her reasons too.'

'Of course she has !' Lady Bain spoke warmly. 'She wouldn't have a penny to live on ! She told me so.'

'Aye, but she told ye wrong. Hugh's a twa-three hundred a year of his own and that would do fine at Stromore. Well, well, she's got to make up her mind over it now, Mr. Dare. Lady Bain came in to say that she's to cable to America to-night whether she's to accept the offer or not, and I've told Maggie I'll take Hugh up to Stromore and look after him as if he were my child. She'll no like to give him up, she's ane of those who hae a sair tight grip when a person's once belonged to them, but she's fair set on America and she's fair set against Stromore. So she's seeing the doctors and just making her decision now and it's no good to worry till she's through.'

That was Miss Ross's ultimate presentation of Myra's dilemma, and upstairs in Hugh's dressing-room, waiting feverishly for the doctors to leave the bedroom, Myra was deliberately making her choice.

Mrs. Sinclair was a clear-sighted woman, and never for one moment in her life had she lacked determination ; yet at this moment she deserved perhaps a little more of Miss Ross' sympathy than she would ever receive. Success, the supreme deity of her altar, whom she had assailed so valiantly, to whom she had clung loyally in spite of all rebuffs and failure, seemed to have turned his face from her now for ever. For if it meant to her dominating personality

failure to lose Hugh, the husband she had won and clung to against all odds, it meant to her even more disastrous and irreparable failure to lose herself for ever by a return to Stromore. And yet, in the five minutes before her, she had not only to make her choice between the alternatives, but also, which was almost as important, save appearances in the sight of her friends below. Most people would have despaired of that with such an audience as Mortimer and Aunt Alexandria, but Myra never.

To save appearances! That thought revealed to her what her decision must of necessity be. Since there was no choice for Hugh but Stromore, the die was cast. To return to Stromore was an impossibility. Not for her were any exile's memories of wet breezes from the Atlantic or the incense of the bog-myrtle on still summer morning in the glen. Stromore represented to her the squalor of her early life, her mother's old home in the little white cottage up the hill, the low village store where Miss Ross, vast and creaking, supplied the natives with tinned food and whiskey and tourists with biscuits and picture postcards. It meant, too, all the hidden intricacies of a past she had resolutely forgotten, a past which Hugh must know if he were sent to Stromore, which must for ever, in view of her own pride and need for dominance, separate her from him. If there were no way out of the tangle of this crisis but a retreat to Stromore, Hugh must go alone. She must give up Hugh. After all, America and new interests and certain success awaited her, and yet—and yet—! She told herself that the parting would break her heart, even while in that heart the main feeling was one of dull passionate resentment.

'After all, he's mine—he's mine,' she repeated to herself, gazing at her hard, pale face in Hugh's little shaving mirror with hot rebellion. Women of Myra's nature, even if they are devoid of her indomitable determination, love the things or people they have acquired with a passion no less strong because it is wholly selfish. Hugh had failed her, thwarted her, cast down her idol of success before her eyes again and again, and yet, in spite of—because of—his perversity, she had set herself more fierily to keep him, to force him into the paths she had chosen for him. Eversince the night he had broken to her his decision about Tamilly she had known that he sought escape from her: ever since then she had sought more desperately to hold him to herself. This last year, when she had forced him to dependence on her, or economic dependence at least, had been one of triumph for her. And now at the last Hugh had evaded her. Just when her conquest had seemed complete, a day

and night of sudden mortal illness had transformed him into a pale, mysterious figure, passed out of her keeping into those of doctors and nurses, his mind remote, his whole personality removed, lost, independent of her at last. And now the crisis was past and health returning in vain. She was to lose either him or herself. Between the two there could be but little hesitation in her choice, but it was the bitterest decision of her life. Hugh, her own recalcitrant, difficult property must be lost at last: he must escape from her now, and in his triumph lay her one unendurable defeat.

The door of Hugh's room opened, and the specialist came out alone. Well, Myra reflected, her decision was made. It remained now to make it clear that it did not come from her, and that would be surely easy enough with a comparative stranger. With the old family doctor it would have been harder. Her mind was made up and his must be as well.

'Tell me everything,' she said, advancing with a pathetic smile.

'I've only good news for you!' The specialist smiled. 'He's certainly round the corner now, and he needs nothing but a year's complete rest and quiet. Get him away as soon as you can; but mind there must be no question of this idea of taking him to America. I couldn't answer for the consequences.'

'No, I understand.' Myra accepted the defeat of a last lingering hope, knowing it was inevitable. 'But I must go, you know. It's imperative for me to work while he's an invalid.'

'But what about this idea of a retreat to the Highlands? He's been talking to me about it to-day, and assures me it would be practicable. Nothing could be better for him.'

Myra's smile flickered and her eyes shone with anger. In some way Miss Ross must have conveyed through the nurses the message she hoped to the last to keep from him. Hugh's escape had begun already, and the bitterness of the thought was intolerable.

'It's a wretched place,' she said, 'no comforts nor amusements.'

'He can do without those for the moment, if he can have rest and peace.'

Myra stood silent for a moment, gathering her forces.

'Sir Arthur,' she said, 'I've something very difficult to say to you. My husband's isn't an easy case, is it? For months before this breakdown he was a changed man at home. Although he clung to me incessantly all I said or did seemed to me wrong. Between us there seemed to be a barrier of nervous hostility. Will you be very kind and tell me the truth? Is his illness just one of those where a man's worst nurse is the one who loves him best?

Will it help his recovery if I let him go to Stromore alone—even if it breaks my heart ?

The doctor gazed at Myra keenly. Was it, he wondered, self-interest or self-sacrifice which inspired this woman, and was he or not to accept her leading as to the orders he was to give ?

'That's a hard question to answer off-hand,' he said. 'Do you imagine he'd recover more quickly alone ?'

'In a sense I do.' Myra's voice trembled. 'He's been my all, husband, friend and child you see. He may depend on me too much.'

'You mean you'd go off to America,' temporised the doctor.

'Yes, to build up a home for him when he's well,' Myra replied.

'It's very hard to decide. A complete change in environment might benefit, on the other hand it might retard his recovery. I fear I must leave the decision to you, Mrs. Sinclair.'

Myra opened the front door for the specialist and shut it carefully. At least, she reflected, his answers had been vague and professional secrecy was on her side. She opened the study door.

'Well ?' asked Mortimer and Lady Bain simultaneously, while Miss Ross looked up over her spectacles, her eyes alert and eager.

'Better, better ! Oh the relief !' Myra sank down into a chair. 'How good you all are ! How good to have all my friends rallying round me ! He's turned the corner, the doctor says, but—but—'

'Aye ?' asked Miss Ross. 'What's to happen next ?'

'Oh, it's so hard to tell you !' Suddenly to her surprise and pleasure Myra found her eyes full of tears. 'I can hardly realise yet the sacrifice I have to make for Hugh !'

'You can't come to America ?' wailed Lady Bain.

'Yes, I must go to America. I'll tell you three—my closest friends—the whole truth. Hugh must go away alone, the doctor says, go to you in Stromore, Aunt Alexandria ! The doctor says his is one of the cases where complete isolation from those he loves is the first condition of recovery. I begged and prayed him to say that at least I might be near him and see him at times, if I might not nurse him, but he was adamant. "Go off to America !" he said—how easy it is for men to give us orders—"do your business and come back to find your husband cured." So you see, Aunt Alexandria, I must hand him over to you, and Amy, I must go with you. There's nothing to be considered but Hugh's welfare.'

Lady Bain was weeping unrestrainedly ; Mortimer averting his gaze with the uncomfortable feeling that all along he had misjudged his friend's wife. Only Miss Ross voiced her feelings.

'Aye but, Maggie,' she said with unwilling admiration, 'I always said ye'd a head on your shoulders !'

IV.

Miss Ross's low, white cottage commanded a view of the valley of the Buich river, as, widening into a fall, it makes its way to its last home in the ocean. From the smaller cottage above Hugh Sinclair had only to climb a few yards to gaze upon the open Atlantic. Yet it was not the white sand nor the seaweed-tangled rocks on which his gaze was fixed one summer morning, some weeks after his arrival. Clear in its tranquil sapphire setting, set flat against a screen of motionless sea and sky, lay the little Holy Island of Inishmull, crowned by the new white buildings of a monastery of Benedictine monks. There, separated from him by the salt estranging seas lay the home of Hugh's heart, the *Ultima Thule* of his imagination. Never while his wife lived could he enter it as an inmate, never for a moment was he disloyal enough to wish anything but good for Myra, and yet to his storm-tossed spirit there only lay peace. He had found in the little white cottage above that of Miss Ross the peace of recovery from illness and long exhaustion, the peace of silence and solitude : to one of his morbidly self-tortured spirit that was not enough. Problems pursued him, questions of his new position tormented him ; his past life and broken vows haunted him. Only in organised work and prayer, that panacea of which the Roman Church holds the secret, could he find the peace which passes, because it supplants, the understanding. So Hugh dreamed as he lay in the sunshine on the heather that morning. Too wearied and tortured to face the present or the future world he saw rest only in the world which never changes nor sleeps.

He was aroused by a step behind him. Up the hill, panting, came Aunt Alexandria, knitting as heavily and persistently as she breathed. Her kind, shrewd eyes followed his out to sea, and she sighed as she sat purposefully beside him on a large convenient rock.

'Ye're looking that way,' she said, without further preamble. 'I'd thought as much lately. Eh well, it's better than looking out beyond to America. I've had a letter from Maggie the morn, and I thought I'd come and talk to ye outright. It's time you knew everything.'

'Is she coming back ?' Hugh's voice shook a little.

'Na, na, she's never coming back. She's written to tell me so.'

Hugh turned rather pale. It is always a rather alarming thing

to receive a sudden and unexpected fulfilment of our secret prayers. Freedom and escape ! Those were the two dreams of his life, and yet—after all—Myra had been his wife.

‘She told me to tell you everything,’ said Miss Ross gently, ‘before ye were well enough to get about and hear gossip. She’d no have let ye come here if she could have helped it, but it seemed the only way out if she was to go to America and she had to thole it.’

‘What did she tell you to tell me ?’ asked Hugh tonelessly.

‘Why just this, about her first husband. She’ll no have telled ye onything about him ? He was the blacksmith here in Stromore and she married him because—aye weel she was wanting fine to marry somebody and he was her oldest friend and there wasna any other body then. He went awa to the war and she got off to London. He was reported killed, and syne she married you—she set her heart on that. And then after all he came back ! (Sit ye down in the shade, laddie, it’s a hard story for ye but it’s better out.) She heard of it just when you set your mind on India, and she was so set on that because she thought she’d get awa’ from all the gossip. He didna try to get her back for he was a dying man, and it was to bring the news that he was gone that I came to London. She wudna tell ye a word of it, and from that moment she set her face against India. I’m no believing much in all her tales about her doctors. It all means ye see that ye were never married to her at a’.

‘We can put that right,’ said Hugh with stiff lips.

‘That’s what I said, but Maggie’s no for it. She told me that she’d decided against it and I was to tell ye. Ye see she’s no a woman who could live with a man who knew she’d kept such a secret, forbye that she could never thole living with ye when ye knew he was but the village blacksmith. Na, certie, that’d no be for Maggie, so ye see you’re free now.’

Hugh sat silent, his mind in too great a turmoil to reconstruct the present or the past, or wholly accept the meaning of the news. But his eyes were fixed once more with despairing hope on Inishmull. Aunt Alexandria’s followed his.

‘I see fine,’ she sighed, ‘you’re looking West, though no to America like Myra. It’s a hard thing she’s made success out of her life and failure out of yours. But, laddie, ye’ve won your freedom. Dinna rush yourself into another tyranny !’

Hugh stood up, torn, bewildered, yet erect and certain at last, his heart greeting Inishmull across the narrow seas.

‘I expect,’ he said slowly, ‘for those who are only failures here, the way of freedom doesn’t lie anywhere but in escape.’

THE GROWTH OF A MILITARY SPIRIT IN CHINA.

BY BRIG.-GENERAL C. D. BRUCE, C.B.E.

'As a result of all that is summed up in Confucianism China has, perhaps, in spite of all its corrupt Mandarins and Officials of the past and present, planted itself more consistently than any other country on moral ideas, and the fact is not unrelated to its long survival.'

BARELY twenty years ago the present writer offered to readers of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE some ideas upon 'the growth of a military spirit in China.'

At that time China was by universal consent the most pacific nation in the world. To-day, she has in the field more armed soldiers than any other country. There are between one million and one million and a quarter men under arms. But, as has been rightly remarked, China can command so little loyalty from them that they guarantee the nation against neither foreign aggression nor internal disturbance.

At first glance, then, there would seem to be no doubt as to the growth of a military spirit in China. But, as we learn by experience, things are not always what they seem to be. How true this is in the Orient will be shown later on.

A disciple of Confucius inquired on one occasion what was essential in the government of a country. Confucius answered, 'There must be sufficient food for the people, an efficient army, and confidence of the people in their rulers.'

'But,' asked the disciple then, 'if we were compelled to dispense with one of those three things, which one of them should go first ?'

'Dispense with the army,' replied Confucius.

'But still,' the disciple went on to ask, 'if one were compelled to dispense with one of these two things remaining, which one of them should go first ?'

'Dispense with the food,' replied Confucius, 'for from of old, men have died; but without the confidence of the people in their rulers there can be no government.'

The above opinion was given by this great sage and teacher some five hundred years before the commencement of our era. It may be considered the guiding principle to the subsequent action

of the nation he taught throughout the centuries that have passed away.

Neither time nor space is available to discuss the moral involved in the last pronouncement of the sage; but it has been plain for all the world to see that, since the disappearance of the Manchu Dynasty and of the 'Son of Heaven' all confidence by the people in their rulers has entirely vanished.

That Confucius spoke the plain truth no one will deny. It is as well to remind ourselves that no other being ever lived whose words have had such lasting influence upon the thoughts, if not the conduct, of a quarter of the human race.

In order that a judicial estimate may be arrived at of the presence or absence of a military spirit in China, let us turn for a moment to the past war history of that wonderful nation.

Before the commencement of the Christian era Chinese power extended over what is now known as Eastern Turkestan. That eminent Orientalist, the late Sir Henry Yule, has also summed up the general acquaintance of Roman historians such as Pliny and Ptolemy with the China of their knowledge in the following words :

'The region of the Seres is a vast populous country, touching on the East the ocean and the limits of the habitable world, and extending West nearly to Imaus and the confines of Bactria. The people are civilised men of mild, just, and frugal temper, eschewing collision with their neighbours and even shy of close intercourse, but not averse to disposing of their own products. . . .'

Though these words express the opinions of men who wrote not far short of 2,000 years ago, it would be difficult to outline with greater nicety the Chinese character to-day. Even at this early stage in their history, these people seemed to have developed that extraordinary propensity for paradox which ever since has marked them. To be known as anxious to eschew collision with their neighbours, yet to extend their military power over the larger portion of what is now Asia, are two things which seem hardly compatible. In the fifth century A.D. it is known that the Chinese imposed their power upon the king of Ceylon. In the seventh they invaded India, and, after harrying Behar, carried away the king of that country a prisoner to China. Not only Behar but other portions of India paid tribute to the great Emperor Tait-sung of the Tang dynasty. The kings of what, at that period, were known as the five Indies, owed him fealty, while his dominions

extended in one direction to the Caspian and in another his power was acknowledged south of the Hindu Kush.

In the eighth century Chinese forces are said to have occupied Ladak, though about the same period it was only by a most favourable reception of Arab envoys that China in all probability saved herself from a Mohammedan invasion. Already Bokhara, Samarcand, and Kashgar had fallen before the fierce onslaught of these religious fanatics, and either the face of nature, in the shape of the Gobi desert, or the reception of the emissaries above alluded to, saved China from the fate of the rest of Asia.

It was in the tenth century that the name of Kitai, or Cathay, as it is now generally known, came to the Chinese through the conquest of their country by the Khitans, an alien people who overran northern China. As has subsequently occurred to other and later conquerors, the Khitans were eventually peacefully assimilated by the people they had defeated in war.

It would be unnecessary to mention the Mongol conquest of China by Chingiz Khan, but for the food for reflection afforded by the fact that it was an emperor of China who pushed his conquests as far west as Hungary. That emperor was Okkodai, the son of Chingiz.

One century later, perhaps the greatest ruler China ever had appeared in Kublai Khan. As a land empire, the territories which acknowledged his sway will bear comparison even with that of Rome. His immediate kingdom, we are told, embraced China, Korea, Mongolia, Manchuria, and Tibet, with claims over Tongking and Burmah. His viceroys ruled in Chinese Turkestan, Trans-Oxania, and Afghanistan. The empire of the northern Tartars covering a large part of Russia—the country north of the Caucasus, and Siberia—was held in fief from him. And, as if this were not enough, the southern portion of his vast dominions included Persia, which then embraced Georgia, Armenia, and part of Asia Minor.

After the enumeration of such wide conquests it may be of interest to make mention of at least one failure met with by the arms of Kublai Khan. On the eastern flank of his unwieldy land-empire lay some small islands, and upon their conquest Kublai set his heart. Zipangu or Jih-pêñ-kuei, 'the home of the rising sun,' the modern Japan, was then, as now, peopled by a race whose love of their island home would brook no invasion. Interesting as a detailed account would be, it must here suffice to say that the first expedition sent by Kublai Khan shared the fate of that

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commanded by Admiral Rojdestvenski, which latter, history as usual repeating itself, was destroyed almost on the same spot as the former ; while the second, a larger and more comprehensive undertaking, was in every respect the precursor of our own Spanish Armada. Leaving out the failure to invade Japan, it is indeed hard to reconcile with such conquests the idea of a peace-loving nation averse to arms. Yet writers in the fifteenth century who knew the country continue to describe a high standard of civilisation and politeness as the leading characteristics of the Chinese.

Dilating on the subject the Jesuit historian Jarric remarked 'that if Plato were to rise from Hades he would declare that his imaginary republic was realised in China.'

In 1405 the Cinghalese insulted a Chinese Mission, so the reigning Emperor Ching-tsu dispatched a naval and military expedition through what are known to-day as the ' Straits,' including in their itinerary Siam. It is perhaps unnecessary to describe further the military exploits of pre-European days.

From the time when, early in the sixteenth century, the Portuguese adventurers were the first to land there, Chinese military organisation must be viewed from a different standpoint. Hitherto it has been unnecessary to do more than enumerate the varying fortunes which attended the employment of their armies, as such expeditions, however vast the scale may have been, represent more the employment and success of mere numbers than any attempt at organisation or even cohesion. The first occasion upon which Chinese troops were called upon to meet foreign invaders was towards the middle of the seventeenth century. By that date Russian expansion in northern Asia had reached the Pacific. During the descent of the Amur Russian and Chinese troops had come into conflict, and a short but indecisive series of fights ended in the Treaty of Nertchinsk. Before the advance of Russia had reached the far East Chinese arms had once again been vanquished by an alien people. By the year 1644 the Manchus had established themselves, and the first Emperor of the Ta-tsing dynasty ruled at Peking. Under Kien-lung, the third of the Ta-tsing dynasty, who, it has been said, raised the empire to its highest pitch of greatness, Chinese arms were once more in the ascendant. Not only was the emperor successful in Central Asia, where a strong policy was somewhat mercilessly enforced, but he also once again sent troops to invade a part of India. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the Ghoorkhas of Nepaul had overrun southern Tibet.

Meeting with little resistance from a feeble Chinese force sent to occupy the country, the Ghoorkhas were at first successful. When, however, the Chinese authorities realised the seriousness of the situation, strong measures were at once taken. Reinforcing the defeated troops, the Chinese in their turn drove back the Ghoorkhas, upon whom they inflicted more than one blow. When the latter retired upon their own mountain-border, not content with their success the Chinese followed, and the unique experience of an engagement fought near the Ghoorkha capital of Khatmandu ended in the defeat of its defenders.

It is such determined military efforts as the one described above which render so difficult the task of estimating the reality of the Chinese military spirit.

To set against the successes obtained in Tibet we must now turn to a neighbouring country farther south. About the same time as the Ghoorkha conquests, Chinese armies were dispatched to Burmah. Though successful in penetrating into the heart of that country the Chinese troops were heavily defeated by the Burmese. From the commencement of the nineteenth century intercourse with foreign nations began seriously to be felt. At the time when the century was half gone the Tae-ping rebellion had shaken the foundations of the empire. That it did not finally effect the fall of the Manchu dynasty is no honour to the military spirits of their race. That the Chinese furnish as fine material for soldiers as any Asiatic race is the opinion of most Europeans qualified to judge. From this opinion General Gordon, who saved the Manchu dynasty, never varied.

With the Tae-ping rebellion came the wars between England, France, and China ; later on the war with France alone in Tongking. In Central Asia, Chinese military prestige flamed up temporarily owing to the suppression of the Yakub Beg rising, but received another shock owing to the all but successful efforts of Chinese Mohammedans to release themselves from a suzerainty they despise. In the present day we are able to follow the fortunes of their arms from a personal point of view.

The China-Japan war with its overwhelming disgrace to the former, taught her no military lesson. The so-called rising in 1900 taught European diplomacy something, but China more.

Whether they were right or wrong, it became plain to Chinese minds for the first time definitely, that in foreign aggression lay the true cause of most of China's troubles.

When the history of the twentieth century comes to be written not the least striking international occurrence will be the story of the Russo-Japanese war.

It is a mere truism to say that the history of Asia began to change from the time when the treaty of peace was signed at Portsmouth, U.S.A., but to what extent this change may affect Asiatics in general is not the purpose of this article. So far as it may be possible, the object in view is to note the effect upon the Chinese, though in tracing the part which China is likely to play in the reshaping of the East—from the military point of view or in other ways—the influence of surrounding nations cannot be ignored.

To anyone interested in the present condition of this unique people, whether politically, commercially, socially, or again from the military point of view, it is a matter for much consideration what form the regeneration of her vast millions is likely to take. At the outset it may be asked, What reason is there to suppose that any such regeneration is in progress?

During the last ten years few who have followed events will deny that there have been signs of tremendous upheavals in China, that the old crust has been broken, and that underneath considerable disturbance is going on. The further question at once presents itself, from what source do these internal rumblings spring? Are they the formless emotions of, for the most part, hopeless millions, ground down by the tyranny of a ruling military class? Or do these mysterious workings represent an intention upon the part of a small minority, commonly known as 'Young China,' to attain the standard of freedom they are beginning to observe in surrounding nations?

Such are some of the questions which must be answered, and from some such hypotheses must we endeavour to find a starting-point before a true assumption of what is taking place can be formulated.

Now, in dealing with problems connected with China, it is customary for most writers to indulge more or less in generalities, the reason being that it is never safe to particularise upon matters affecting the conduct of this inscrutable race. While admitting the justice of this plea, and while fully aware of the futility of attempting to lay down hard and fast lines of reasoning, it is useless to pretend to discuss the trend of public spirit in any people, even in the Chinese, if we may not assume possible courses of action.

It is only by thus postulating some such course that we can place ourselves in a position to judge of the chances of a new spirit arising in China. It is my intention for the moment, and without prejudice, to assume the possibility of a wave of militarism and to attempt to lay before readers of *THE CORNHILL* reasons for and against such a change coming to pass. History has its lessons which he who runs may read. The wise man does not neglect them. It has, too, the sometimes awkward but always interesting habit of repeating itself.

In suggesting possible causes of the subterraneous movement now going on in China the writer has endeavoured to indicate two which on the face of them have a reasonable chance of being true ones. Let us endeavour to ascertain which of the two is likely to be the most direct cause.

It is a not uncommon error among Europeans to think of the masses in China as ground down by their rulers, and as forced to pass their time in a miserable struggle for existence. And such a description bears just this stamp of truth, that if we persist in regarding things Chinese from the Western point of view, the over-taxation and oppression by the military officials might be so described. So also might the existence of people who to the extent of many millions live daily on the verge of starvation. But if the millions of whom we thus think have never known anything better? If, for centuries, custom has sanctioned the one abuse and withdrawn all terrors from the other, are we justified in using such language, even though to Western ideas it states what are facts? From time immemorial official life in the East has been guided by certain assumed canons. That these unwritten laws are as well understood by those ruled as by the rulers is also a fact. So long as the latter are content to comply with acknowledged custom all is well. Illegal oppression, one-sided justice, the buying of cases, are the rule not the exception, hence are accepted as necessities of existence in China.

But if officials, or in the present case military adventurers, more voracious than ever before, plunder, squeeze, and make life intolerable for the common people, retribution — according to immemorial custom — ought to follow. That it has not followed is because unarmed, defenceless, leaderless millions are entirely at the mercy of hordes of modern-armed soldiery.

There remains, then, the second of the suggested causes, and though, perhaps, incorrect in form, as any definite statement of

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cause in China is almost bound to be, it may be allowed to indicate with sufficient accuracy the general trend of feeling which at present stirs a minority of educated Chinese in that country. If it be thought that this latter statement contains the germs of truth, we are then brought face to face with the inquiry, What form are the aspirations likely to take? In themselves worthy of the sympathy of all who are happy in the possession of ideals, it is unfortunate that such aspirations cannot be regarded solely from this high standard.

‘China for the Chinese’ is a laudable and patriotic catchword. But if the catchword becomes a slogan to cover up the innumerable breaches of faith and backslidings of present-day Chinese governments, then it is highly mischievous as well as entirely misleading.

If straws serve to show the direction of the wind, it is no less true that recent events in China point in a direction from whence a dangerous storm may arise. With every wish to avoid the imputation of being an alarmist, it is useless to ignore facts, especially when, as at the present time, these are most pertinent to the question under discussion. If there is one feeling more than another which can be said to permeate the responsible classes—that is, those who lead and who are able to shape what answers to public opinion in Europe—it is that the foreigner is responsible for the present unhappy state of their country. It is not necessary to say that this falsehood so widely disseminated is believed by those who are responsible for it. That also is beside the question. That the governing classes and officials can make use of such a statement when necessary, that it awakens at least some echo in the hearts of many millions of ignorant people, is sufficient for their purpose. The danger lies in the fact that under sinister influence this belief may be made use of to turn aside natural and commendable aspirations from a legitimate to an illegitimate end.

Let us suppose that the danger which an attempt has here been made to foresee, should gather force. It may be asked, How will it affect the actions of the minority party whose fortunes we are endeavouring to follow? It has been remarked at the commencement of this article that the history of Asia began to change on the day when the Japanese granted peace to a defeated white race. It is not to be expected perhaps that the full significance of such a unique occurrence should dwell over long in the thoughts of Europeans. To the West, which hardly allows its children time to think, that historical moment was merely an episode. But

such was not the point of view of the East. To the slow-thinking Oriental that episode was first a wonderful revelation only half credited, now the most cherished article of his future belief which the great War has confirmed. What effect, then, will the digestion of such a belief be likely to have upon an intensely proud Asiatic race? Allowing that under evil direction the cry of 'China for the Chinese' is not considered sufficiently stirring, but that it is thought necessary to couple with it 'out with the foreigner,' has not the time arrived to leave generalities, and to discuss actual possibilities?

If it be granted that there is ever so slight a chance of the present unrest taking some such form as is here indicated, the first steps towards carrying out such a policy must be the creation of some armed force as a weapon to be used.

A new issue, and one which may create infinite harm for China, is the agreement between that country and the Soviet leaders. To say the least of it the new agreement is unlikely in any way to help towards a resettlement of China. Whatever efforts the Allied Powers may make to further the realisation of the ideals of 'Young China,' Soviet-Bolshevism stands in the way. The avowed purpose of the Soviet leaders is the subversion, not only of European civilisation, but of any other. It is improbable that such a chance as the present situation in China gives will be missed. If one quarter of the human race can be inoculated, ever so mildly, an outbreak of the disease will effect the Bolshevik purpose.

That China is unlikely ground in which to plant or from which to reap a full crop of Bolshevism is true. But as long as an enemy is there to plant with a free hand, just so long will the danger exist.

Sir Robert Hart, founder of the Chinese Customs Service, once wrote a warning. Few Europeans have ever equalled Sir Robert Hart in his intimate knowledge of Chinese psychology.

'National sentiment,' he said, 'is a constant factor which must be recognised and not eliminated when dealing with national facts, and the one feeling that is universal in China is pride in Chinese institutions and contempt for foreign.'

Later in his warning Sir Robert Hart added:

'In fifty years' time there will be millions of Boxers (1900 outbreak) in serried ranks and war's panoply at the call of the Chinese Government.'

As to these millions: In a country like China it is difficult to estimate what proportion of the population could bear arms without detriment to the national welfare. Allowing that the

proportion of males to females in China is larger than in any European country—remembering, too, that she is predominantly an agricultural one, we are on the way to ascertaining possible figures. The population of Japan is between sixty and seventy millions, her available military forces about half a million. Taking the much-discussed population of China as 400 millions, we find that she should be able to count upon an army of from seven to nine million men.

There remain for discussion two final questions: Do the Chinese as a nation desire such a weapon to their hands? Could China alone and unaided create such a weapon?

The answer to the first question is given by Sir Robert Hart in another portion of his article. While foreseeing many of the dangers which in the last twenty years have come to a head he remarked that 'China is still looking forward to the day when it will be strong enough to revert to its old life again, and do away with foreign intercourse, interference and intrusion.'

Few who know China are likely to disagree, but that foreign intercourse can now be done away with is out of the question. The Chinese are born traders and will seek markets for their exports when and where they can. They have also now become accustomed to the use of many foreign articles at present imported. But foreign interference and foreign intrusion—as they appeared to the mind of Sir Robert Hart—will before long be things of the past. If the peaceful impact of Western nations upon China is felt by all classes to be detrimental to China's best interests, they will have no more of it. On the other hand, if the future rulers of China, be they representatives of the federated provinces or of the central government, aim at the best interests of China, foreign trade and foreign help will be sought wherever they can be obtained.

To the second question the writer unhesitatingly answers no. But this is not the whole answer. There are in China to-day new forces to hand by which the necessary military organisation might in time be created. One of the legacies left by the Great War to China is the loss of all extra-territorial privileges by three foreign powers, Russia, Germany, and Austria. Having no longer the same privileges as citizens of the other foreign powers, it is inevitable that the views of the foreigners who do and those who do not enjoy extra-territorial privileges in China will differ. Here we find for the first time in history European nations whose diplomatic representatives cannot see eye to eye with the other diplomatic

representatives in China. Is it not natural that with a view to ameliorating the conditions of their own nationals they may be forced, over certain questions, to side with China ?

Already we hear of Russians fighting on both sides in the present civil war, of Russians and Germans acting as advisers and as experts in the manufacture of various munitions of war. Here then is a possibility which should not be overlooked in estimating the growth of a military spirit in China.

Left to itself such a spirit is entirely opposed to forty centuries of Chinese life and history. Watered and nurtured by outside influences, there is no certainty that such a spirit may not materialise.

Burke once wrote :

‘ To make a government requires no great prudence. Settle the seat of power, teach obedience and the work is done. To give freedom is still more easy. It is not necessary to guide, it only requires to let go the rein. But to form a free government—that is, to temper together those opposite elements of liberty and restraint in one consistent work, requires much thought, deep reflection, a sagacious, powerful, and combining mind.’

In China to-day, unfortunately, no such mind exists.

NIGHT SHOOTING.

BY MAJOR J. STEVENSON-HAMILTON.

OF the various methods of pursuing dangerous carnivorous animals in Africa, sitting up by night at a 'kill,' or over a water-hole, is that entailing the least risk to the sportsman. In fact, there are those who think—where lions are in question, at any rate—that it is only redeemed from being cold-blooded murder by two factors: first, the chance given to a wounded beast, duly followed up in the morning, of 'getting his own back'; and, secondly, the risk to the hunter—somewhat remote, perhaps—of being pulled out of his tree, or from his *zeriba* on the ground, by his intended prey, during the hours of darkness.

Regarded from another point of view, a night spent sitting alert over 'kill' or water-hole, far away in the lonely forest, is a great education in the ways of the wild. To reap the full benefit of the occasion the vigil should be spent in a tree, and by moonlight. If you build a *zeriba* on the ground you will see little or nothing, save the *silhouette* of the animal you are going to shoot, through the strictly limited outlook of a loophole; and if there is no moon you will see nothing at all. The animals may get your wind, too, should a night breeze spring up, and once this has happened it is quite possible that nothing else will come near you for the rest of the night. From a tree, on the other hand, while there is no risk of betrayal by the wind, you have, provided there is a good moon, a wide and complete view of all that is taking place around. The disadvantages are that you are farther from your prospective quarry than when in a *zeriba* on the ground, and that the shot must be directed from a sharp downward angle at an animal indistinct against a sympathetic background; whereas, when on a level with the ground you yourself have the benefit of the skyline.

If it should be decided to sit up a tree, a good platform of strong sticks must be laid across a fork, or large horizontal branches, at a distance of not less than twelve feet from the ground; on this platform grass must be spread, and the watcher's blankets over all. If in a country where such things are in use, a native bed, or *angerib*, deprived of its legs, may be employed with advantage,

and must, of course, be lashed firmly to the branches. The experience of sitting up all night up a tree, unaided by one or other of the above arrangements, is one not likely to be repeated voluntarily.

Should it be deemed desirable to shoot from the ground, a hole, two or three feet deep, and wide enough to permit reclining and turning easily within, may be dug; around and over it is constructed a very strong zeriba of thorns, or of stakes driven into the ground. The shelter can, of course, be made without the pit; but things can be seen more clearly defined in the dark when the eyes are about the ground level. Several suitable apertures must be opened through the thorns or stakes, that a comfortable aim may be taken from any angle. The hunter, on first installing himself, will do well to get into the easiest possible shooting position, and to practise his aims, so that, when the critical moment shall have arrived he may be prepared for his shot, without any of that preliminary shuffling about which would be quite likely to destroy his chances of success.

In addition to the rifle and ammunition, a water-bottle, filled with cold tea or coffee, a greatcoat or mackintosh, knife, matches, and some food are desirable concomitants of the vigil. On dark moonless nights I have used an electric lamp made to fit on the band of the cap, and designed to throw a beam of light along the rifle barrel to the target. I have heard of this method having been employed with considerable success, but I must confess that, in my own case, the animal has always bolted the moment the light was switched on, and before it could be properly focussed on him. I have found a more successful method to be the tying of a small piece of white rag round the muzzle, with a big knot just above the foresight. It is a mistake to bring a native attendant as companion; he is almost certain to go to sleep and snore at the wrong time, and will, on the whole, probably prove more a hindrance than a help.

It is a great error to imagine that a lion cannot see a man up a tree. This is a belief current even among people with some experience of the forest; but, though he is not so extraordinarily cunning and wary as the leopard, I have invariably found that, at the very slightest movement or sound, the former has looked up and spotted me at once. If the watcher keeps absolutely silent and still, the lion will not notice him; but neither will a leopard or any other wild animal.

When a lion or a leopard arrives on the scene he will seldom have been viewed, and never heard, beforehand. He is suddenly just there, and is prone to vanish as mysteriously as he came. At best a faint shadow, hardly distinguishable, seems to glide over the ground, but you could not swear to it one way or the other. Even in quite good moonlight it is not easy to distinguish the beast at anything over twenty paces. If there is a 'kill' to be watched, the carcase must be securely pegged down, so that hyænas may not suddenly rush in and drag it away out of the line of vision—no uncommon occurrence. Nor should the muzzle of the rifle be more than ten yards from the point where it is anticipated the quarry will be standing. If a much longer shot than that be taken in the uncertain light the possibility of wounding without killing is much increased, thus involving a nerve-trying morning spent following up through thick bush or long grass. Night shooting is always uncertain work, and the tendency to fire high has to be most carefully guarded against.

When sitting over a water-hole it is well to remember that the usual time for lions—indeed, for all the larger cats—to drink is just before dawn. The rule is by no means invariable, however; few things ordered by wild Nature are; she does not direct her affairs by operation orders.

I experienced a very striking example of this departure from custom, some years ago, while in North Central Africa. It was the end of the dry season, and, in the vicinity of a certain Government post, a small hole in the sand represented the only water within a radius of many miles. Each morning the guardians of the post would issue forth from their zeriba, and laboriously excavate the sand from the hole, that they might reach the scanty and not over-inviting water; and each night carnivorous animals from far and near would hold revel from dusk to dawn; with the result that the hole was always once more effectually choked up with sand by daylight.

The water-hole lay not more than one hundred yards outside the zeriba, in a little hollow surrounded by a dense grove of large trees, and the serenade of grunts and snarls, varied by appalling roars, which went on all night and every night, ended by getting on the nerves even of the not very impressionable Sudanese soldiers, who, though not worried to the extent of feeling impelled to take any active steps in the matter themselves, nevertheless displayed what might almost have passed for animation on their wooden

countenances, when I told them I proposed to stay a few days and sit up at the pool. They then supplied further information to the effect that a lioness with two cubs usually chased away any women who ventured down to the spot before the sun was well up, with the result that it was late before the hole could be cleared of sand sufficiently to permit of water being drawn from it, and later still before any cooking could be done in camp. No big game existed for many miles around, and none ever drank at this hole. Nor, though there were plenty of oribi and bushbuck close by, could I ever discover signs of either of these species making use of the place. I suppose there were too many human beings on the move by day, and too many dangerous beasts by night, and perhaps they found the juicy leaves of the undergrowth in the thickets sufficient to quench their thirst. Probably the lions had to travel long distances nightly, either before or after hunting, to get to the water, and this would suffice for the extreme irregularity of their arrival; but a mystery, to me insoluble, was, why—when there was plenty and good water where the big game was, ten miles or so away—the lions did not stay there permanently, but, on the contrary, undertook nightly a long and weary pilgrimage specially to use the not very tempting fluid by the post. The leopards, of course, were local, preying on the bushbuck and the oribi; but the lions went after the herds of tiang, and roan antelope, the nearest spoor of which was miles away.

I sat up for four nights altogether at this place, the moon being in her second quarter, and the experience proved to be one of the most interesting that has ever fallen to my lot.

Very soon after sundown lions would begin to arrive singly—never, in my experience, more than two together—and would appear at irregular intervals all through the night until just before daylight. Except for a single lioness, which always came in the late gloaming, they were all most inconsistent in their habits, the same animal coming one night quite early, and on the next delaying until nearly dawn. Doubtless their punctuality depended upon their hunting luck, and where they happened to find themselves on conclusion of the chase. I formed a theory that the early drinkers came prior to hunting, while the ones that arrived late had concluded their night's business. I used to hear them roaring four or five miles away in the still night air, and gradually approaching nearer and nearer.

It was most remarkable how the approach of a lion was always heralded by a general hush. Some hyenas, and a jackal or two, might be down by the water, snuffling and nosing, making a good deal of noise. Suddenly there would be dead silence, and in an instant more the whole neighbourhood of the pool would be completely deserted. After a minute or two of this eerie quiet, a bushbuck in the thickets a hundred yards away would bark sharply. Then dead silence once more, for a period of varying length. The lion was somewhere close by, but not advertising his presence ; in fact, a peculiarity of these lions, which impressed me, perhaps as much as anything else which I observed of their habits, was the extreme caution which they displayed in approaching the water. No white man, prior to myself, had ever been in this particular little backwater of Africa ; and the local natives, regarding them as tribal fetishes, considered it to be as good as suicide for a man to kill one of them ; so they could not possibly have ever had any previous experience of being hunted. Nevertheless, they would walk round and round, scrutinising the vicinity from all sides, during a period which varied from five minutes to a quarter of an hour ; and, when they had at last satisfied themselves that all was clear, would walk straight down to the water, take not more than half a dozen laps, sit up, like cats, on the brim for a few seconds more, and then quietly and unhesitatingly walk straight away. The procedure was really almost exactly identical with that of the large game animals, as seen in the day-time. It may be that they instinctively feared the human beings whom they knew to be in the camp close by. The first night I sat up I failed sufficiently to *camouflage* the left flank of the *angerib* on which I was reclining. A lion came quietly along under shadow of the trees, and, though I was not conscious of having made any movement, when about twenty yards distant he suddenly halted, gave one growl, and made off at full speed. This was about midnight, and nothing else came near the water for the rest of that night.

Another night, about 10 P.M., a leopard arrived, and, having stared about for a bit, went down to the water. He was standing over the hole, gazing into it in a meditative sort of way, when suddenly, without the slightest warning, he stamped furiously for some thirty or forty yards, and then stood just outside my range of vision, growling and snarling continuously. I made certain he must have seen me, but could not conceive how I had

come to betray myself. There was no wind, and I was sure, not only that I had made no movement, but that the branches which I had carefully arranged round my *angerib* completely hid me from sight. While I was still speculating on these lines I suddenly became conscious (the last two words exactly express the sensation) that a lioness was standing exactly where the leopard had been a minute or two before. She did not 'arrive,' as we understand the word; she was just suddenly 'there.' She did not so much as glance at the still violently demonstrating leopard; but, after a steady stare all round, proceeded to satisfy her thirst. I think it was somewhere during the small hours of that same night that two leopards came close under my tree without noticing me. Now, this tree was absolutely the only one sited properly for purposes of observation; but it was low, and I had not been able to select a suitable perch at more than eight feet from the ground; so, to obviate possible unpleasantness to myself, I had built a small thorn *zeriba* all round the base of the trunk. I could hear the leopards apparently rolling about on the ground just outside this, and on one occasion enjoying a minor 'scrap'; but, peer as I might, I could not, owing to the dense black shadow of the trees, make out even an outline. After ten minutes they went away and silence ensued for a time, to be rudely broken by the sound of a large animal rushing furiously over the dead leaves which carpeted the ground. Almost simultaneously an oribi uttered a terrified cry, and I heard it bound away. In the dead silence of the night the chase was quite audible—its course indicated by continuous frightened bleats, and one could visualise the remorseless pursuer gradually closing on his victim. However, I heard in the morning from one of the people in camp, who happened to be awake at the time, that pursuer and pursued passed close to the huts, and that the oribi made good its escape, as, indeed, might be expected, if it survived the first hundred yards.

Another time a jackal came to drink, but, although to all appearance very thirsty and unwilling to leave the vicinity of the water, he yet seemed much too nervous to go down to it. He would come close up, hesitate, halt, and then suddenly rush off into the shades. After ten minutes, back he would come, and exactly repeat the same performance. After some two hours of this he went away for good, without having drunk at all. I suppose a lion or leopard must have been lying somewhere close by, though I saw no signs of either. *Hyænas*, too, always dis-

played intense nervousness when lions were about. They seemed to know perfectly well when any of the latter were near. One night no lions came at all after a comparatively early hour, and the hyenas arrived in numbers, and all night long rolled about in the sand playing with one another in clearly conscious security. The only creature which came with perfect regularity, and never seemed to heed whether beasts of prey were about or not, was a night heron. It always came alone, and never appeared to be in a hurry.

Out of three leopards which I shot in the course of these night vigils, only one was killed outright; with each of the others I had certain experiences on the following morning. When wounded, a leopard is about the fiercest animal that lives; and may always be relied upon to do his best to charge home.

On the first occasion, the beast was standing broadside on to me, and beside the water-hole; the distance being twenty-five yards and the moon shining. Upon being hit he rushed furiously past my tree making a great noise, and then fell over somewhere out of sight behind my perch. For a time I heard him rolling about among the leaves, and then all becoming quiet I thought he was probably dead. As soon as it began to get light I peered about; but, not seeing him lying where I expected him to be, I descended very cautiously and, after another good look, walked over to camp and had a cup of coffee. I then returned, accompanied by two men with rifles, one of whom was an old Sudanese sergeant. We found the place where the animal had rolled over, and noticed a good deal of blood, but he had moved off. We followed the tracks, which led into the heart of the thicket. This not being good enough, we got into the open again, and had hardly done so when the leopard arose from behind a large log on the edge of the covert, and at once made off at a good pace. I got a quick snapshot of him as he was disappearing, and fortunately, as it turned out, broke one of his hind legs. We now skirted the thicket, and found the tracks leading right through it, and onwards into a patch of low scrub and dense matted grass, covering about a quarter of an acre. We walked round this, and, as no spoor appeared coming out, it was clear our quarry was lying low inside. It took a few minutes to decide upon the best thing to do, since a direct follow up under the circumstances would have been decidedly foolish. Eventually I posted one of the men under cover on the far side of, and a hundred yards from, the

bush, to give us notice if the beast broke that way. Then I stood the old sergeant behind a sapling about forty yards outside, and placed myself in a similar position, but about ten yards nearer, and a little to one side of his post. I then told him to look carefully, and if he saw any movement in the scrub to put a shot in. There being no sign of life, after a few minutes I signalled to him to fire. The old fellow, getting himself into correct military position, and bringing his rifle to the shoulder in regulation time, pressed the trigger. Big game hunting was far from being in Shawish Abdulla's line ; but, probably by instinct, he had aimed at the thickest part of the patch of bush. Almost simultaneously with the report of the Martini-Metford there came a loud grunt ; a head obtruded itself from a clump of long grass, and in a fraction of a second more a big male leopard was making as fast as a broken hind leg would let him—and it was marvellous how fast he could come—straight for Abdulla, who, having stepped from behind the tree, because it hindered his adoption of the regulation position for independent firing, standing, was now fully exposed in the open. I could see the old man hesitate ; he was unwilling to retire in face of the enemy except by word of command, and yet there was no time either to insert another round or to fix his bayonet. Eventually Nature conquered ; yet it was with rifle properly at the trail that Abdulla retired at the double. By this time, of course, but a second or two from the firing of the shot, the leopard was level with me, and no more than seven paces distant, making straight for the Shawish, whom it would certainly have caught. It is remarkable how cool one can be when not oneself exposed to personal danger, so I waited till the animal—which had not uttered a sound after the first loud grunt—was exactly opposite me, and then smashed his shoulder. The combination of a near fore and near hind leg being both out of action at the same time was too much of a handicap even for an angry leopard, and he stopped dead, though without falling over. I was therefore able to get a point-blank 'sitter,' and killed him with the next shot. Abdulla now counter-marched towards me, and on arrival expressed much contrition and shame that he had ventured to retire without orders, explaining that he would never have done such a thing had only his bayonet been fixed. Of course, it was a job entirely out of the old man's line, and rather beneath the dignity of a scarred warrior who had taken part in nearly every Sudan battle of importance during the last forty years ; so I explained to him

that he had done exactly the right thing, and that I was well aware that he had fallen back solely with the idea of drawing the enemy on, and causing him to expose himself, a statement which soon restored his cheerful grin.

A night or two after this I had killed a leopard, and an hour later his companion, another large male as it proved, appeared, and finding the carcase, stood over it uttering low, rumbling, and continuous growls. In the middle of this I fired, and the beast immediately dashed off into the darkness. I could not see him; but from the noise he was making, and the sound of cracking sticks, which he was evidently crushing with his teeth, I judged him to be pretty badly hit. In the morning I got some Dinkas from the camp to assist me, anticipating that their agility, fleetness, and savage discretion would suffice to keep them from harm. About fifty yards beyond the water-hole, and just on the edge of a patch of heavy timber, lay a great fallen tree. Its trunk formed a rampart some three feet high, and the limbs and branches a strong *abattis*. Somewhere in the middle of this the occasional crack of a branch showed the position of the leopard; he remained, however, completely concealed from view. I therefore crept up under cover to the shelter of a bush, on his flank as it were, and some forty paces distant from the spot where I judged him to be lying. Here I remained, in discreet effacement. All being now ready, three or four of the Dinkas advanced from the front across the open ground, waving their long spears, leaping into the air, and, with loud yells, inviting the foe to come forth. Nor was the challenge long neglected. While they were still over thirty yards away out came the leopard, going very short, but still making such good headway that he had halved the distance before the Dinkas had more than time to turn round. However, once started, these long-legged savages ran so fast that the crippled leopard very soon realised he could not catch them, and stopped just about opposite where I was, giving me an easy shot, which rolled him over—dead.

JOHN WESLEY'S LAST UNIVERSITY SERMON.

BY BERNARD W. HENDERSON, D.LITT.

At ten o'clock of the morning of Saint Bartholomew's Day, Friday, August 24, in the year 1744, the hot sun streaming through the windows of St. Mary's Church at Oxford filled the great galleries with light. But the body of the church, sheltered by these, lay in shade, except where some glancing ray lit up the scarlet robes of some Doctor of Divinity with a splash of colour.

Row upon row of young gowsmen filled the galleries to overflowing. Not less thronged by their seniors was the floor beneath. In the aisles under the galleries yet a third equally curious crowd of citizens and racegoers was gathered from out the blazing High Street into the cool shade. All eyes were turned expectantly upon the tall slender pulpit. Nearly two centuries had passed since under that same pulpit had sate the old Archbishop Cranmer and listened to the doom pronounced upon him by savage ecclesiasticism. With the years had come wisdom, perchance, and tolerance. Yet something of that same temper seemed to make heavy the atmosphere and to inspire not a few unfriendly looks directed upon the small upright figure in the pulpit that morning of rich summer. Could not still an insulted outraged clergy unfrock one who, nurtured in the bosom of the Church, assailed his brethren with denunciations? This his pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost was, in the words of the famous Bishop, a horrid thing—a very horrid thing.

The preacher, a man forty-one years of age, for his part faced his audience quietly. A slight flush coloured his clear-complexioned face. His hair was black, and most carefully parted. His eyes were brighter even than their wont. Yet his demeanour was passionless, and scarcely a gesture disturbed his preacher's gown. His keen glance travelling round the church passed over the crowded Doctors' pews, where many reverend theologians, even Heads of Houses among them, were standing in their eagerness to hear the better, and rested for a moment with affection upon his brother and the two others who alone had dared escort him through unfriendly streets to the church porch. Then in clear tones he recited the Bidding Prayer, 'more especially' for his own two

Colleges of Lincoln and of Christ Church and their members of every degree. The prayer finished, silence fell once more.

The preacher's thought flashed backwards through the years—to the little many-frescoed Oxfordshire village church whither that mid-October day nineteen years before he had ridden out from the city to preach his first sermon ; to the small grey quadrangle of his ancient College where the vine with clinging tendril and tiny cluster of half-formed grapes was clambering up over the window-sill of his peaceful quiet rooms ; to the preachings and quarrellings of those many weary months in the distant land beyond the angry ocean. Then, swifter than an eagle's flight, it sped back to the great church of his University where he had so often preached, where now he stood to deliver what he well knew might be the last message it should be permitted him there to give. At least this should ring out clearly. 'Whosoever heareth the sound of the Trumpet'—the text rose unbidden in his mind—'and taketh not warning, if the Sword come and take him away, his Blood shall be upon his own Head.' Once, just three years since, he had been minded to speak words of wrath from that same pulpit. 'How many voluntary blockheads there are among us,' he had written, 'whose ignorance is not owing to incapacity but to mere laziness ! O what is so scarce as learning, save religion !' He had suppressed those angry words. Now the time was come when with equal faithfulness, if with less fury, he would deliver his own soul.

'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' The recitation of the text stilled in a moment the rustling of the great congregation. Yet, as the preacher turned page after page of his carefully penned manuscript, disappointment slowly grew. Was this what they had come to hear, just a plain, unvarnished, unimpeachable tale of Christianity's beginning, going on, covering the earth ? Here there was nothing wherewith to mock the enthusiast, to trounce the heretic.

The preacher paused. The wandering attention of his hearers came back home, as in clear tones John Wesley spoke his final words from St. Mary's pulpit.

'It remains only that I should close the whole with a plain practical application.

'It is utterly needful that some one should use great Plainness of speech toward you. It is more especially needful at this time ; for who knoweth but it is the *last* ? Who knoweth how soon the Righteous Judge may say "I will no more be intreated for this

People ? Tho' Noah, Daniel, and Job were in this Land, they should but deliver their own Souls." And who will use this Plainness if I do not ? Therefore I, even I, will speak.

' Let me ask you then, in tender love, and in the Spirit of Meekness, Is this City a Christian City ? Are all the Magistrates, all Heads and Governors of Colleges and Halls, and their respective Societies (not to speak of the Inhabitants of the Town) of one Heart and of one Soul ? Is the Love of God shed abroad in our Hearts ?

" I have said, Ye are Gods," ye Magistrates and Rulers ; ye are by Office so nearly allied to the God of Heaven ! Are all the Thoughts of your Hearts, all your Tempers and Desires, suitable to your High-Calling ? Is there in all your Actions Dignity and Love ?

' Ye Venerable Men, who are more especially called to form the tender Minds of Youth, to dispel thence the Shades of Ignorance and Error, are you " filled with the Holy Ghost " ? Desiring and labouring that wherever the Lot of these young Soldiers of Christ is cast, they may be so many burning and shining Lights, adorning the Gospel of Christ in all things. And permit me to ask, Do you put forth all your Strength in the vast Work you have undertaken ? Do you labour herein with all your Might ?

' What example is set by us who enjoy the Beneficence of our Forefathers ? By Fellows, Students, Scholars ? More especially those who are of some Rank and Eminence ? Do ye, Brethren, abound in the Fruits of the Spirit ? In Lowliness of Mind, in Self-denial and Mortification, in Seriousness and Composure of Spirit, in Patience, Meekness, Sobriety, Temperance ? Is this the general Character of Fellows of Colleges ? I fear it is not. Rather, have not Pride, and Haughtiness of Spirit, Impatience and Peevishness, Sloth and Indolence, Gluttony and Sensuality, and even a proverbial Uselessness, been objected to us, *perhaps* not always by our Enemies, nor *wholly* without Ground ?

' What shall we say concerning the Youth of this Place ? Have you either the Form or the Power of Christian Godliness ? Are ye not conscious to yourselves that you waste away day after day, either in reading what has no tendency to Christianity, or in Gaming, or in—you know not what ? Do you remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it Holy ? Are not Drunkenness and Uncleanness found among you ? Yea, are there not a Multitude of you that are Forsworn ? I fear, a swiftly increasing Multitude. Be not surprised, Brethren ; before God and this Congregation, I own myself to have been of that Number : Solemnly swearing to " observe all those Customs," which I then knew nothing of ; " and those Statutes," which I did not so much as read over, either then, or for some years after. What is Perjury, if this is not ? But if it be,

O what a Weight of Sin, yea Sin of no common Dye lieth upon us !
And doth not the Most High regard it ?

' May it not be one of the Consequences of this, that so many of you are a Generation of Triflers ; Triflers with God, with one another, and with your own Souls ? Can you bear, unless now and then in a Church, any Talk of the Holy Ghost ? Would you not take it for granted, if one began such a Conversation, that it was either Hypocrisy or Enthusiasm ? What Religion are you of ? Even the Talk of Christianity ye cannot, will not bear ! O my Brethren ! What a Christian City is this ? It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine Hand.

' So hath Iniquity overspread us like a Flood ! Whom then shall God send ? The Famine, the Pestilence (the last Messengers of God to a Guilty Land) or the Sword ? The Armies of the Romish Aliens, to reform us into our first Love ?

' Nay, rather let us fall into thy Hand, O Lord, and let us not fall into the Hand of Man ! '

As noon clanged from Oxford's towers, John Wesley rode away eastwards from the city to preach at Wycombe on the way to London. There he made entry in his Journal :

' St. Bartholomew's day. I preached, I suppose the last time at St. Mary's. Be it so. I am now clear of the blood of these men. I have fully delivered my own soul. The Beadle came to me afterwards, and told me the Vice-Chancellor had sent him for my notes. I sent them without delay, not without admiring the wise providence of God. Perhaps few men of note would have given a sermon of mine the reading if I had put it into their hands ; but by this means it came to be read, probably more than once, by every man of eminence in the University.'

Meanwhile the preacher's brother, parting from him at Oxford, went riding off for Bristol, reflecting, not without some quiet gaiety, on the morning's doings.

' If they can endure sound doctrine like his,' Charles wrote in his own Journal, ' he will surely leave a blessing behind him. We walked back in form, the little band of us four, for of the rest durst none join himself to us. I was a little diverted at the coyness of an old friend, Mr. Wells, who sat just before me, but took great care to turn his back upon me all the time, which did not hinder my seeing through him.'

That same day Benjamin Kennicott, an undergraduate of the mature age of twenty-five, sate in his rooms at Wadham College and wrote coolly and critically his own story of the day's events. The generosity of patrons, moved by the young man's poetical promise, had sent the future Hebrew scholar from Totnes in Devon to the University. Curious chance has preserved his tale of John Wesley's preaching on that Friday :

' On Friday last, being St. Bartholomew's Day, the famous Methodist, Mr. John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College, preached before the University. Which being a matter of great curiosity at present, and may possibly be greater in its consequences, I shall be particular in the account of it. All that are Masters of Arts, and on the Foundation in any College here are set down in a Roll, as they take that Degree, and in that order preach before the University, or pay three guineas for a Preacher in their stead : as no Clergyman can avoid his turn, so the University can refuse none, otherwise Mr. Wesley would not have preached.

' He came to Oxford some time before, and preached frequently everyday in Courts, Public Houses, and elsewhere. On Friday morning, having held forth twice in private, at 5 and at 8, he came to St. Mary's at 10 o'clock. There were present the Vice Chancellor, the Proctors, most of the Heads of Houses, a vast number of Gownsmen, and a multitude of private people, with many of his followers, both brethren and sisters, who with funeral faces and plain attire came from around to attend their Master and Teacher.

' When he mounted the Pulpit, I fixed my eyes on him and his behaviour. He is neither tall nor fat, for the latter would ill become a Methodist : his black hair quite smooth, and parted very exactly, added to a peculiar composure in his countenance, showed him to be an uncommon man. His prayer was soft, short, and conformable to the rules of the University. His text, Acts 4, 31—" And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." And now he began to exalt his voice. He spoke the text very slowly, and with an agreeable emphasis. His introduction was to prove that the word "*all*" in the text was meant not only of the Apostles, and those who received the extraordinary, but of others who received the ordinary influences (only) of the Holy Ghost ; and that of such there were many in the infancy of the Gospel : persons who had no business to perform besides the reformation of their own lives ; and therefore wanted the ordinary Divine influence only to assist them in their conversion and complete their Christianity. And this he chose to do, because if the Holy Ghost was necessary for men as private persons at first, it must be so in all ages.

' His division of the text was, first, to show the influence of Christianity in its infancy as to individuals ;—secondly, in its progress from one period to another—thirdly, in the final completion of the Universal conversion of the world to the Christian Faith.

' Under these three heads, he expressed himself like a very good Scholar, but a rigid zealot ; and then he came to what he called his plain practical conclusion.

' Here was what he had been preparing for all along, and he fired his address with so much zeal and such unbounded satire as quite spoiled what otherwise might have been turned to great advantage : for, as I liked some, so I disliked other parts of his discourse extremely.

' Having under his third head displayed the happiness of the world under its complete final reformation, now, says he, Where is this Christianity to be found ? Is this a Christian Nation ? Is this a Christian City ?—asserting the contrary to both. I liked some of his freedoms, such as calling the generality of young gowns-men "a generation of triflers," and many other just invectives. But considering how many shining lights are here, that are the glory of the Christian cause, his sacred censure was much too flaming and strong—and his charity much too weak in not making larger allowances. But so far from allowances, that after having summed up the measure of our iniquities, he concluded with a lifted up eye in the most solemn form—"It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand"—words full of such presumption and seeming imprecation, spoken so remarkably powerfully, that they gave an universal shock. This, and the assertion that Oxford was not a Christian city, and this country not a Christian Nation, were the most offensive parts of the Sermon, except where he accused the whole body (and confessed himself to be one of the number) of the sin of perjury, and for this reason, because upon becoming members of a College every person takes an oath to observe the statutes of the University, and no one observes them in all things. But this accusation gives me no uneasiness, for in every oath the intention of the legislation is the only thing you swear to observe—and the Legislators here mean that you shall observe all their laws, or upon the violation of them submit to the punishment if required, and this being explained in the Statute Book given to every member, does, I think, solve the whole difficulty.

' Had these things been omitted, and his censures moderated, I think his discourse, as to style and delivery, would have been uncommonly pleasing to others as well as to myself.

' He is allowed to be a man of great parts, and that by the excellent Dean of Ch. Ch. (Dr. Conybeare) ; for the day he

preached, the Dean generously said of him, "John Wesley will always be thought a man of sound sense, though an enthusiast."

'However the Vice Chancellor sent for the sermon, and I hear the Heads of Colleges intend to show their resentment.'

But the Vice-Chancellor was Euseby Isham, Rector of Wesley's own College. The influential Dean of Christ Church too, John Conybeare, formerly Rector of Exeter, had himself known, when he was Wesley's age, what it was to preach in St. Mary's a sermon which an unfriendly Tory critic could describe as 'a sad Puritanical Whiggish thing,' and moreover governed the College to which Wesley himself as an undergraduate had belonged. The two perhaps mitigated the sterner forms of the resentment of that close oligarchy, the Heads of Houses, which then ruled the University despotically. The preacher himself tells us what befell. Alluding to the date of the Act of Uniformity, August 24, 1662, and to his own sermon on the anniversary of the same, he writes :

'I am well pleased that it should be the very day on which, in the last century, near two thousand burning and shining lights were put out at one stroke. Yet what a wide difference is there between their case and mine! They were turned out of house and home and all that they had: whereas I am only hindered from preaching, without any other loss; and that in a kind of honourable manner, it being determined that when my next turn to preach came they would pay another person to preach for me. And so they did twice or thrice, even to the time that I resigned my fellowship.'

The sermon, entitled 'Scriptural Christianity,' was published a month after its delivery, price threepence, and quickly reached a fourth edition in that same year. To it the author prefixed a short note.

'It was not my Design, when I wrote, ever to print the latter Part of the following Sermon. But the false and scurrilous Accounts of it which have been published, almost in every Corner of the Nation, constrain me to publish the Whole, just as it was preached, that Men of Reason may judge for themselves.'

'JOHN WESLEY.'

'October 20, 1744.'

He remained Fellow of Lincoln until his marriage in 1751. Once again at least, in November 1768, he was in Oxford, preaching 'in a room' there at the age of sixty-five. He lived yet many

years thereafter, dying on March 2, 1791. For close on half a century after St. Bartholomew's Day, 1744, he rode and preached through the length and breadth of England. But after that day the University of Oxford listened to his voice no more. Now in these latter days his Society has spread wherever the English tongue is spoken. Some might find the cause in the then stupidity of the Church of England. John Wesley himself might once more choose rather to admire the wise providence of God.

[NOTE.—A few months ago, in the summer of this year, an undergraduate scholar of Kennicott's later College, Exeter, reading an old volume of Clarendon's History in the College Library, found embedded in its pages two and a half sheets of old letter paper filled with writing, faded but clear. This was entitled 'Account of a Sermon preached before the University of Oxford, by Mr. John Wesley, by an Undergraduate—no date.' He brought it to the then librarian. Investigation showed that the contents of this same letter had been published verbatim by one Elijah Hoole in the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* for 1866, who gave it as an 'account by the famous Hebrew scholar Dr. Kennicott in a letter which comes to us well authenticated.' Hoole adds: 'This letter is taken from a copy made by the Rev. T. Fowler, Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxon., from one in the possession of Dr. Stanley, of the original letter, which belonged to the late Dr. Pearson, Dean of Salisbury.' The Exeter College letter bears no name, and is not in the handwriting of either Kennicott himself or of Thomas Fowler, late Fellow of Lincoln and then President of Corpus. The letter paper is stamped apparently with a small crown or coronet and some ten letters, 'super' (?) above, and the rest, undecipherable, below the device. One small fact suggests that it was Hoole's original—albeit not in Fowler's writing. The Methodists who came to hear the sermon are described in it as present 'with funeral faces.' The adjective is underlined. Was it for this reason or for some other, which might well have pleased Charles Wesley's sense of humour, that Elijah Hoole prints it 'with general (?) faces' and so makes nonsense of it ?

More than half a century has passed since the contents of this letter, with this one variation, were published. Its pleasing commentary on a famous sermon, and not improbably the famous sermon itself, have long since been forgotten. In these post-war days when congregations in St. Mary's are anything but vast, the chance find of this letter, its puzzle still unresolved, may justify this our presence in St. Mary's Church on that August morning a hundred and eighty years ago.]

10 VICTORIAN

THE PEACOCK SARI.

BY L. M. CRUMP, C.I.E.

THIS is a tale of coincidences—also a tale of consequences. As for the coincidences, they just happened. The important thing is that they happened to me or within my knowledge. As for the consequences, they also happened and may happen again, though it is open to anyone to deny that they were, are, or will be consequences. I only state the facts.

I was home on leave from India, where I serve in the Political Department. This has nothing to do with elections or anything of that sort. In India a Political Agent is not the man who looks after the votes and the voters, but the representative of the Government of India at the Court of one or more of the Indian princes. Coming home I naturally looked up my old chief—Sir William Mackenzie, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., under whom I had served when he was Chief Commissioner in Maghrabistan. He had retired from the Civil Service and had lately been much interested in the Wembley Exhibition, especially the Indian section. I called, he asked me to dine, and the dinner—just the two of us—took place on the night of my first visit to the Exhibition. He asked me what I thought of it as a whole and if anything in particular had struck me.

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘the Peacock Sari among the Indian embroideries.’

‘Why so?’ he asked very quickly and with something like a start.

‘Because I’ve seen it twice before and I can’t help wondering how it got where it is.’

‘It’s on loan,’ he replied.

‘From whom?’

‘Well, before I answer that, suppose you tell me what you know of it. It’s a superbly beautiful thing and I should like to know its history. Where did you first see it?’

‘I’ll tell you that in due course,’ said I, ‘but when I’m spinning a yarn I like to begin at the beginning and, if you don’t mind, I will.’

‘All right—fire away.’

‘Well, as you know, before I came to you in Maghrabistan, I was First Assistant at Nawababad—

Sir William nodded.

‘You must remember the succession case there, how, despite the innumerable women the old Nawab kept in his harem, he had no child, how in his extreme old age he got hold of a Hindu girl from

beyond Almora and, when he found she was pregnant, converted her to Islam and married her. Then the Nawab died, and this girl or Her Highness the Begum, as she styled herself, claimed the succession for her son, who was born within a few days of the Nawab's death. The collaterals of the family set up a counter-claim, in which *inter alia* they denied the Nawab's paternity, and in which they were supported by all the nobles of the State, who further stoutly declared that whatever Government might decide as to paternity, they would not bow the knee to the son of a dancing-girl of the lowest class. The girl denied this origin and alleged that she was a Brahmin girl from Oudh. She failed to prove this to the Resident's satisfaction, and eventually I was sent off to see if I could verify the counter allegation. I took with me to Almora Hari Kishen Das of the secret police, one of the cleverest detectives I have known among Indians. I stayed quietly in Almora, while he, in various disguises, made inquiries among all the Paturiyas, who have a regular colony there. You know their customs. The women are married young to a complaisant husband, such as a shisham tree or a deodar, and then trained as dancing-girls. The ordinary ones are sold to fill houses of ill fame, and the pretty ones carefully taught in every art and adornment of vice, to become the mistresses of Maharajas and other wealthy Indians. Hari Kishen got in among them, and in a few days he had found the grandmother of our so-called Begum of Nawababad and bribed her to tell the truth. I felt it wise to see the woman and record her evidence myself, so at dusk I slipped out with Hari Kishen, who led me as secretly as possible to her house. As I entered she quickly pushed into another room a girl of about fourteen years, whose face I saw by the light of a lamp and it was, I think, the most beautiful I have ever seen. Under bright glossy blue-black hair, a face of perfect oval, features almost Greek, daintily pencilled eyebrows, and dark eyes like two lakes of depth unfathomable——'

'You're waxing poetic.'

'You needn't laugh, she was superbly beautiful. However, my business was with the old woman, a withered hag, whose beauty had been destroyed by years of vice, and now only showed in the gleam of the great eyes, which she had handed on to her granddaughter—for so I placed the girl. When we had finished haggling over the price—for she tried to extract more from me than she had agreed with Hari Kishen—she gave me the story of our Begum's birth and sale to the Nawab, with full details of the bargaining, the price, the go-between, and the date, and this information

eventually led to the rejection of the Begum's claim on behalf of her son. When Hari Kishen and I went away, somewhere about midnight, there was a rustle of draperies in the street and a girl vanished round the corner leaving a youth standing alone. I saw him quite clearly, for it was now bright moonlight, and I thought, from the glimpse I got of the girl's clothes, that she was the same as I had seen in the house. So did Hari Kishen, for he said, "There will be another succession case in Khankila if the Khan doesn't look out."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, that girl is the sister of our Begum. I hear she has just been sold to the Khan of Khankila, and it looks as if she had a lover already."

"It was no business of ours, so we went back to Almora and next day started for Nawababad, where I made my report.

"In a few months I was transferred to Maghrabistan, under you, sir. You know I was very keen on Persian carpets, indeed on carpets and embroideries generally, and knew a good deal more about them than most. By degrees I made friends with old Abdullah Khan, the dealer in the Sadr Bazaar. He soon found I knew a Senna from a Kirmani and began to unbend, and eventually, whenever he had a particularly good bit, he would let me know and we would discuss its merits together. It was a sight to see the old man with a good old carpet. He adored the pattern and the colour and the gloss, and stroked the smooth surface as tenderly as a lover the fresh smooth skin of a maid. One day I happened to be passing his shop and seeing him sitting there, telling his beads and ruminating as he told them, I gave him a call—

"Anything new in the shop?"

"He looked up, saw me and rose to salaam: then asked me in.

"Yes, I have something to show you; not a carpet but a sari, but such as I have never seen before. Come and I will show it to you."

"He took me inside the shop and got out his keys, unlocked a huge brass-bound chest and took out a parcel. He then led me out at the back of the shop into a courtyard, from which he quickly sent the womenfolk flying, and calling two of his men, he bade them unfold the sari and display it in the full light of the sun. It did not look very large as it lay in its folds, but as the men undid it, it seemed as if it would never end. At last it was unfolded and I shall never forget the gleam and the glory of it. On a foundation of the finest muslin—Chanderi possibly, but I wasn't sure—had

been woven a pattern of peacocks, each male strutting in the full glory of his plumage and of the outspread fan of his tail, before two hens, against a background of roses and jasmine. The colouring was marvellous, the blues and the greens shone with the gloss of the bird itself, and, as the fabric undulated slightly in the breeze, the sun seemed to catch it so that it threw off arrows of light.

‘ I was amazed with its beauty and said so to Abdullah, who, however, told me to go close to it and examine it. When I did so the reason of the flashing lights was revealed, for on the surface had been sewn innumerable flakes of emerald and jade, of agate, ruby, and lapis lazuli, and the eyes were two diamonds. Yet so skilfully had the stitching been done that the stones appeared part of the embroidery. There was no effect of patchwork and each high light from the flashing stones was exactly where it produced the right effect.

‘ When I had gazed at it awhile and examined it with care, I turned to Abdullah and asked its value. He merely told me to come inside, and, after he had locked the sari up in the coffer, he took me to an upper room looking out on the street and sat me down. He asked me to smoke and if he might smoke himself, lit his hookah and puffed quietly at it for a while. I waited, for obviously the matter was of importance, and then repeated my question.

“ Listen, Sahib,” he said, “ and advise me : for by Allah, I am in a perplexity : that sari is, as thou seest, a thing of beauty, such as I, in all my lifetime, have never seen, I, who have wandered after carpets and embroideries through Hindustan and Iran and Iraq, and even to Bokhara and Rum. It is a thing made by a king for a queen, and yet”—the old man paused—“ yet this Purbee, this man from the East, offers it to me in a manner I do not understand.”

“ What man is this ? ” I asked.

“ One who calls himself Yar Muhammad of Lucknow, and I know not if his words be true or false, yet this much I do know, that he tells me not all his purpose.”

“ Well, what is his story ? ”

“ He says that this sari was woven by the orders of one of the sultans of Oudh for his favourite queen, whom he loved above all his women, but she took a lover who used to visit her by a secret stair in the very harem of the king. But at last they were betrayed and the king laid a trap for them and caught them. The man was stripped and bound before him and he bade them strip the woman also : then, repenting, he bade her women dress her in all her jewels

and finery, and over the jewelled corselet they wound this very sari round her breasts and over her head. She was consenting unto this, for she yet hoped that at the sight of her in all her beauty the king would repent, but in this she made a mistake. He did but set her in all her beauty before her lover that his death might be the bitterer, and he did but clothe her in all her finery that she might the more keenly regret the world she was to leave. For before her eyes her lover was tortured to death by cruelties beyond telling, and, when she broke down and bowed herself, screaming at his agonies and in dread for herself, the king of a sudden drew his scimitar and smote off her head, and bade his men cast her body to the dogs. This they did, and there the body lay in the courtyard in the sun, until night came and the king went into the women's apartments. Then, like jackals, the servants darted on the body, and soon there was a hand-to-hand fight over the jewels, which all sought first. But while they fought over these, a woman got hold of an end of the sari, and, pulling it out, thrust it in her bosom and glided away, rejoicing to have secured some share of the plunder. That night the king lay with another of his queens, who asked him the boon of the jewels of the dead and of this sari, and the king made promise. But in the morning was the corpse found despoiled, and the king was in great wrath against all who had laid hands on the woman. For the jewels neither he nor the queen had much care. Jewels can always be bought, but a sari like unto this had never been made or seen, and the search after it was hotly pressed. Many of the jewels were found and the thieves put to the sword, but of the sari no trace, for the woman had not been seen and she had hidden her prize in a safe place, so that at the last the king got angry and exclaimed, 'Cursed have I been who had this thing made : cursed be he who so shall possess it : faithless was she to whom I gave it and faithless be she to whom it shall be given : in the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate ! Amen.'

"The woman was the more afraid when she heard of the curse, but she did not restore the sari, and after a time gave up her service at the palace and took the sari away. Yet for fear of the king she could not sell it, and at last when she came to die, at a very great age, she gave the sari to her favourite grandson. He is, so he says, a man of no wealth, and being afraid that if he sold such things openly in Hindustan, there might be trouble with the police and the English Sahibs, he has come hither to try to sell it to the Khan."

"But why shouldn't this be true ? and if he wants to sell it to the Khan, how dost thou hold it in thy coffers ?"

“ Sahib, the man is a Purbeea from the East, and here among these frontier thieves he is afraid. Moreover, he knows that the Khan has no trust save in me, from whom, or by whose advice, he has bought many things for his women. Hence has he given me the sari to keep, and for the truth of his tale, true it may be; indeed, I care not if it be false, but he will not let me carry the sari alone to the Miri of the Khan, and says that he will come with me. If he can trust me to keep, cannot he trust me to sell for him, if so be that I can get the price he wants? And the Khan will trust none but me who am an old man and known to him for many years, in the inner court, where I can display my wares to the women. All things that I can, I have said to dissuade the man from his purpose, or to induce him to sell me the sari and let me sell to the Khan, but no, naught contents him but to go with me to the Miri: and I suspect there is something behind it. Now, go, Sahib, for here he comes.”

‘ I got up and passed a slight, handsome young Oudh Mohammedan entering the shop as I went out. His face seemed familiar to me, but it was only after much thinking that I remembered the face I had seen for a moment in the moonlight in the Paturiya village, beyond Almora.’

I paused and Sir William said, ‘ Well, the plot thickens slightly, but I take it there is more to come.’

‘ Yes—a good deal. Shortly after, duty took me out on tour, and when I came back I found that old Abdullah had gone off on a carpet buying expedition to Persia, which kept him away for months, and I had nothing to remind me of the business, except that once in the bazaar I thought I saw the youth from Oudh, but I wasn’t sure and it only made me wonder what had become of the Peacock Sari.

‘ At last old Abdullah returned, and at almost the very time there were many rumours of trouble in the Miri. You know, sir, the sort of rumour that used to run about that the Khan had chopped this woman into pieces or impaled another, and so on, and you know too the uselessness of any inquiry into what was done behind those blank walls that hid the rabbit-warren which he called his harem.’

Sir William nodded assent, and indeed he knew more of the villainies of the Khan and the mysteries of the Miri than I or perhaps than any one did.

‘ I saw Abdullah once or twice but, though I made inquiries, he was reticent, and it was not till some months had passed that he

asked me to come to the shop. There from the great coffer he again took out the Peacock Sari and asked me to examine it. This I did with care, for I saw there was a purpose behind his request. I turned it over and over and said to him—

“ Two things strike me—one that in parts it has been torn and mended ; this has been wonderfully done and would almost escape notice, save that some parts of the old work round the tears appear to have lost colour or to have been stained—stained more probably.”

‘ Abdulla smiled.

“ True, but none save thee would ever have noticed and haply thou wouldest not, had I not bidden thee look with care. I had to send the sari by a trusty hand and seek in the city of Chanderi for the descendants of him who wrought it, and to-day it has come back repaired as thou seest.”

‘ This was interesting, but not what I wanted to know : so I went on—

“ But tell me, what of the Purbeea youth ? How didst thou manage the sale, if sale there was ? and if a sale how came the sari back to thy hands ? ”

‘ Abdullah put the sari back in the coffer and again he took me to the little upper room and lit his hookah.

“ Sahib, dost thou know aught ? ” he began.

“ Why do you ask ? ”

“ Well, thou art of the Political Service and 'tis thy business to know what happens in the Miri of the Khan ; moreover, thrice hast thou made question of me about the sari and of the Purbeea : hence I ask thee if thou hast knowledge which I have not.”

‘ I looked him straight in the eyes, but he met my eyes frankly, and I replied—

“ Of what happens in the Miri thou knowest more than all the Politicals in Maghrabistan, and what has become of the Purbeea, that perchance thou also knowest : one thing alone I know that thou dost not know : I had seen that Purbeea before he entered thy shop.”

“ Where ? ” he asked sharply and abruptly.

“ In a Paturiya village beyond Almora.”

“ And when ? ”

“ Over a year ago ; before I came here.”

“ And what was he doing ? ”

“ Nothing, but I should say he had just been having a midnight interview with a girl.”

“ Do you know the girl ? ”

“ I could not be sure, but I think a Paturiya girl and sister of her whom the Nawab of Nawababad married.”

“ By Allah ! that completes it.”

“ By Allah ! No ! It’s for you to complete it.”

“ That will I,” he went on ; “ light another pipe while I order coffee, and listen. For many days after that day when thou didst see the Purbee enter my shop I argued with him about going to the Miri but he would not listen to reason. Indeed, he was a fool, and offered me first a quarter and then half the price of the sari if I would but take him with me. Then I knew for a certainty that he was playing some deep game and that there was more behind. Yet the bribe was large and I did not then see how I could come to harm, so in the end I promised to take him to help carry my bales, but I warned him that he would not enter the inner court. He was angry over this and sulked for days, but after all this was beyond my power. However, eventually he agreed and a day was fixed. I had let the Khan know that I had a sari such as he had never seen and fit to adorn the fairest woman born, and I looked for a good price, for I had heard that he was infatuated with his latest purchase—a hill girl from beyond Almora.”

‘ I nodded in reply to his meaning glance, for I began to see how the land lay, and he continued.

“ We took the camels through the streets and to the outer gate of the Miri, then to the inner gate, and there unloaded and the loads were carried to the gate of the inner court by my men, including the Purbee. Then I sent them and him away and the Khan’s eunuchs bore them inside, and I showed my wares to the Khan, who was sitting there with a woman closely huddled in a burkha beside him. I kept back the sari till I had shown everything else, and when I at last showed it the woman flung up her arms and clasped her hands to the lattice over her eyes for a minute, cast a hurried glance round the court and then, as if suddenly recollecting herself, burst into a string of exclamations at its beauty and I knew that I should get my price. And I did,” he added, with a smile. “ When that was settled and my goods were to be taken away I saw the Purbee, as soon as the gates were opened, march in and begin to pick up a bundle. The eunuchs were on him like a flash and he was hurled out, lucky not to have been slain on the spot. Fortunately they had no swords on them, and I hurried out and rescued him as they were beating him to a jelly, explaining that he was a Purbee who knew not the customs of the Miri. Had it not been I, whom they had known for so many years, they would

certainly have killed him, but at last, with much difficulty, I induced them to let him go.

"I got him to his house and left him with a warning against ever being guilty of such folly, but he gave no reply. The Khan paid me in a few days and I visited the Purbeeaa again and, after settling the account with him, asked when he was going to his home."

"I do not know," he replied, "but not for a few days; I am still lame and sore from the beating."

"I looked at him and felt sure that there was a mystery, but he said no more, and I could not ask, so I left him with a warning to be careful. He did not leave the city, for I saw him several times, once or twice in the evening on the road to the Miri—and I began to get suspicious. Again I went to see him, but could get nothing out of him. I made inquiries and found that he slept most of the day and was out most of the night. This confirmed my suspicions and then I began to think, and this was my thought—assuming that the Khan gets to know it was I who first took the Purbeeaa to the Miri, that it was I who saved him from the eunuchs, and further, that the sari was his and I had taken half the price, then should anything untoward happen in the household of the Khan, I ran the risk of a terrible revenge. Hence I found that my business required a journey to Persia as thou knowest."

"Thou art a wise man, Abdullah Khan, and full of forethought."

"It is well to take thought when one crosses the path of the Khan, for he has many in the Miri to slay at his bidding, secretly or openly. And when I was nearing home on my return, I thought again and came to a halt across the border. Thence I made enquiries of the Khan's household and when I heard what thou hast doubtless heard, but also made sure that no word was spoken against me, then and not till then came I home."

"Well thought again," said I, "but the sari?"

"In good time," he replied, "for I had cause to think again when, the morning after my coming, the Khan sent for me to the Miri. I pondered much and made all inquiries I could, before I went, and when I decided to go, I took a revolver and a knife, and further resolved that in the Miri I would neither eat nor drink. And to my household I gave a letter to be given to thee, Sahib, if I did not return by nightfall."

"Bravo," said I, for it was a brave resolve in the circumstances; "but go on."

“ I got to the Miri and they led me into the inner court and then to the private apartments of the Khan within the harem. There on a bed sat the Khan and I could see that his temper was evil, and he had been taking opium till he hardly knew what he was about. I slid my finger on to the trigger of my revolver, for I had resolved not to die alone, and I did not know what he might not do. At last he sent the two men who were with him out of the room and tried to tell me what he wanted, but I could make out little save some broken words about the sari, and a man and a woman, and strings of muttered curses. I knew not what to do, but at length I thought that a fresh draught of opium might revive him for a spell so that he could tell me what he wished, and yet there would be less danger to me for his strength of mind and body would be enfeebled. As he sat nodding in semi-stupor on the couch, I sent for his men and bade them prepare and bring a fresh draught. He took it when it came and drank it eagerly. Slowly it took effect and the light came back into his eyes and he seemed to see me for the first time.”

“ Are you fit, are you fresh, are you content ? ” he asked, as if he had just met me.

“ I gave the usual answer and then we talked of things indifferent for a while and all the time the drug was gaining on him. At last with eyes, now burning like red embers, he jumped to his feet and bade me follow.

“ I followed and he led me to a balcony which overhung a deep pit, and of this thou hast doubtless heard.”

‘ I nodded, for I knew well by repute this balcony, whence the Khan had men and women flung down to impale on the cruel spikes below—men for crossing his rages or disregard of his orders women often for naught save that he was tired of them or they were barren.

“ Look,” said the Khan, pointing over the balcony, and I looked down and saw the corpse of a man, and that of a woman clad in the Peacock Sari hanging there on the spikes below. As I gazed at them, thinking that the man had been long in dying, but the woman, whose breast was pierced through, must have died at once, the Khan burst into a loud laugh.

“ That thing,” pointing to the man’s corpse, “ that son of a swine, that dog of a Purbeea defiled my household, and one night, when on a sudden I went to see that daughter of the devil”—and he spat at the corpse—“ I found her, dressed in all her jewels and that sari there, dancing to him in her room. I had them seized and

brought here and I hoped to see him afraid when I had him bound to be cast over. By Allah ! I knew not these Purbeesas could be so brave. Verily by the will of God and the might of love, the mouse may become a lion. By Allah and the Prophet, that worm, that Purbeea, opened his mouth and defied me—me the Khan of Khankila—here with the jaws of death gaping for him.” The Khan paused for a minute and then took three steps along the balcony. “Here he lay bound and the men ready to lift, and he spoke and said, ‘Cast me, and may God curse thee in this world and the next : yet praises be to Allah that I have had this woman in this world and take her with me to God’s mercy : yes, thou dog, she was mine before she was thine, and mine while she was thine ; to this very purpose did I bring hither this sari, that my presence might be known to her, and that the curse, which the King of Oudh set on it, might alight on thee, and that she in her faithlessness to thee, who gave it, might yet be faithful unto me whom she loved. Now cast me, thou unclean dog, and thou, love, tarry not long.’ So said he, turning to the woman, who smiled at him, and I was angered and bade the men cast, and I rejoiced for but one hook pierced his thigh and he was like to be long a dying. As I looked and rejoiced, of a sudden the woman, who was not bound, leapt from between those who held her, hurled herself at me like a wild cat so that, but for my men seizing me, I had fallen over the balcony ; then, seeing she had failed, she cried with a loud voice ‘Love, I come, I come !’ and leapt herself there where she hangs now.” The Khan stopped and gazed down at the corpses and as he gazed the power of the drug seemed to go out of him, but I knew he had not sent for me to tell me all this, which in his senses he had never told, so I went to him, pulled him back, led him indoors again, sat him on the bed and bade him speak what he would. I thought he would collapse into stupor again, but being now sure that it was of the sari he would speak, I mentioned it. The word seemed to stimulate him.

“ Yes ! ” he said in a thick voice, “ the sari ! that unclean dog spake the truth : there is a curse on it ! a curse ! a curse ! Of the guards that I set on the corpses of the evildoers—nay”—and here he laughed an evil laugh, as of one smitten by the hand of God—“ nay not on the corpses—on one corpse and on one that for three suns was not a corpse—ha ! ha ! ha !—of the guards, I say, two tried to steal that sari and were slain of the others, and two women tried to steal it and they are dead likewise : six hath it slain and I fear lest I be the seventh : take it and sell it, yet in a far country

that thy eyes may not see it more, for on it there is a curse ! a curse ! a curse ! ” As he finished, he rolled over asleep on the bed and I came away.

“ Bringing the sari ? ” Abdullah nodded assent.

I expected Sir William to make at least some comment on what was to me one of the most thrilling experiences of my many years in India. Instead he sat silent for a few minutes, then pushed the port decanter towards me and rising left the room. He was back in two minutes with a book and a paper. He came round the table, stood by me, opened the book, found an entry and put his finger on it : ‘ No. 593. A sari embroidered with peacocks—date and place of manufacture unknown—lent by the Honourable Mrs. Beverly-Stuart.’

‘ Do you know who she is, or was, perhaps I should say ? ’ asked Sir William.

I shook my head.

‘ She was the daughter of Rosenstein.’

‘ What, Sir Abraham,’ said I, ‘ who was out in India this last cold weather ? ’

‘ Yes, and soon after he came home she and he quarrelled because he intervened in some trouble between her and her husband about another man ; she refused to be reconciled to her husband and it was commonly stated that she had gone off to Spain with the other fellow.’

Sir William slowly opened the evening paper, found the paragraph he wanted, showed it to me and I read :

‘ TRAGIC DEATH OF A MILLIONAIRE.’

‘ The death from heart failure is reported of Sir Abraham Rosenstein, the well-known financier and politician, at his residence in Park Lane. The proximate cause of his sudden demise was the shock of hearing the news of the death of his daughter, the Hon. Mrs. Beverly-Stuart, whose body, as reported in our earlier issues, was found beneath the balcony of her window in the Hôtel de Luxe at Algeciras. No details of Mrs. Stuart’s death have yet been received.’

Everyone has heard the details, in spite of all attempts to hush the matter up, and the Peacock Sari is now for sale—to anyone who cares to buy.

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FIFTY YEARS OF SHAKESPEARE ON THE STAGE.

BY THE DEAN OF WINCHESTER.

III. THE TRAGEDIES.

BEFORE we come to the great tragedies I must say a word about that curious medley, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. Of course we all know that it did not appear among Shakespeare's works till the Fourth Folio, and that many critics think it quite impossible that he should have written several scenes in which others find the express character of his mind. There are, certainly, all sorts of unpleasantnesses in the play as we now have it, and of archaisms and oddities. Much must go if we are to have the play acted at all—though I for one plead for Gower as chorus with his cat and his cricket :

‘ The cat, “with eyne of burning coal,
Now couches fore the mouse’s hole ;
And crickets sing at the oven’s mouth,
E’er the blither for their drouth.’

Leave out what you must, but, whatever you do, don’t put anything in. Alas ! that is just what Mr. John Coleman did when he produced the play at Stratford-on-Avon in 1900. He changed Tarsus to Nineveh, Pentapolis to Cyrene, gave us a scene of revels in the house of Lysimachus (which was almost as unpleasant as those for which it was substituted), a slave market, a funeral of Marina (with a comic pirate as a mourner) and a large tomb inscribed in big black letters ‘ Sacred to the memory of Lychorida.’ In plain words, the play was utterly spoiled. If it is to be acted, Fleay’s beautiful selection, with all those noble lines which Tennyson vindicated for Shakespeare, might certainly be given, and even some of the comic parts would not be beyond the endurance of the singularly tolerant playgoer of the present day : however plain a spade may be it does no worse work than an agricultural implement. The Stratford performance led me into controversy with Mr. John Coleman, who was, I am quite sure, a most honest and enthusiastic man. He said he had never heard of me. I did not remind him that I possessed, as a gift given with his autograph, his version of *Henry V* (which was freakish, but not so freakish as his *Pericles*) : I only said that a cat may look at a king, even a king on the stage ;

and I suppose he may mew too. It was quite a pretty contest, which was to have been fought out when Mr. Coleman redeemed his promise of acting his play in London. But he never did so. The matter with it all was that even the very best parts of the play were altered, and capable players like Mr. Oscar Asche, Miss Brayton, Miss Braithwaite, Mr. Thalberg, Mr. Clarence, and Mr. Coleman himself, were thrown away on a mass of ridiculous verbiage which affronted the memory of the creator of *Marina*. *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* disappeared, and emerged as Mr. John Coleman.

The Winter's Tale, which is half a tragedy, separates the comedies from the histories in the 'Globe' Shakespeare. And how beautiful it is on the stage! For most of us veterans, though we grieve that Irving was never Leontes, or Ellen Terry Hermione, parts which surely would have fitted each like a glove, our memories are inextricably linked to the beautiful Mary Anderson. I have to think a long while before I can remember who was Leontes, and even who was Autolycus (though he was very good indeed); I rather think Lionel Brough was the Shepherd, quite delightful; but Mary Anderson eclipsed them all. The serene beauty of her Hermione, its wonderful purity, calm, holiness, the grace and sweetness of her Perdita, so fresh and girl-like, are things quite unforgettable. I remember, in more recent days, the tragic power of Lillah McCarthy's Queen, a fine study, impressive, human; I do not forget how Henry Ainley tore the passion of Leontes to tatters, or how excellent were Arthur Whitby as Autolycus, H. O. Nicholson as the Shepherd, and Leon Quartermaine as the Clown, or the charm of Denis Neilson Terry as Florizel. The columnar rigidity of the setting comes back to me; but no memory of the play touches that of the peerless beauty and goodness of Mary Anderson—an example of how the stage can teach and inspire. She was both Hermione and Perdita, as I have just said, and it is difficult to say in which she was the more beautiful. I think, on the whole, the Hermione was the finer performance, because it showed the tragic feeling, the full sympathy she possessed, and a sort of entralling power which made you watch and wonder, when she was silent, and foresee that something great and inspiring was to happen, to her, and through her, as though you did not already know the play by heart.

And that is what a great actor or a great actress can show you: they can make a stage play, most of all when they have the greatest of plays in their hands, to mean something extraordinary and wonderful, like life; to be pregnant with great actions still to

come, as you feel they are prescient ; to hold the mirror up to nature in a way which not the greatest romance can do, or even the greatest play without their magic touch to lend it a new life.

I pass in my record to great and happy memories—to *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* and *Othello*, to *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cymbeline*. The first Shakespearean tragedy I saw was *Hamlet*, in 1876, when Henry Irving was Hamlet and Miss Isabel Bateman was Ophelia. What an excitement that production was ! It was said to be the first *natural* Hamlet the English stage had seen (some may remember, as I do, J. L. Toole's imitation of Fechter ; but that enthusiastic Frenchman was before my day). I can't look at the mezzotint of the immense John Philip Kemble, with the skull and the Order of the Elephant, without feeling awed ; but I can't imagine, after what Mr. Partridge said, that Garrick was not natural. I am not sure that Irving even was quite natural ; I am sure that the other Hamlets I have seen—Barry Sullivan and Frank Benson—were not. But Irving was wonderfully beautiful and romantic, and indeed real. Can anyone be quite natural as Hamlet ? What do you mean by natural ? I suppose the great feature of his acting which struck people in 1876 was the reality of the soliloquies. 'I am alone' : those words were the key to all the soliloquies, for they were self-communings, the utterance of pent-up thoughts which crowded upon the mind. And that was the tone all through the play ; there was not the slightest effort, apparently, for effect ; the dialogue went smoothly, fresh from the mind and the lips. I remember that the first time I saw Irving as Hamlet I was a little disappointed. I suppose I had formed an impossible conception of what he would be. But when I saw him later I entered into the wonderful intensity of the performance : I saw how he had lived himself into the character and gave it out from within. This was especially true in his soliloquies, most of all perhaps in 'To be or not to be' ; but it was almost equally true of the moments of passion, and in the pathetic tenderness of the scene with Ophelia. In that scene Hamlet was proceeding to the free expression of his love when he suddenly saw the movement of the arras behind which Polonius and the King were concealed, and then he turned to cruel irony and rejection. It was an extraordinarily appealing scene : the third act all through was startling, arousing—especially in the pent-up anxiety and the hysterical triumph of the play scene ; and the fifth was extraordinarily pathetic. Sir Edward Russell, the great dramatic critic of that day, said very happily ' Every great

actor has been anxious to show how he could play Hamlet : no one has quite succeeded in showing *how Hamlet would have played it*. And this is what Irving does.' That, I think, was exactly true. He made Hamlet not the rhetorical disclaimer that even the greatest actors before him had not been able entirely to get away from, and he brought him among us as a natural, highly sensitive human being. As one followed the play scene by scene this was what struck one : the humanity, and the sensitiveness. There was a complaint, I think, at first that the words,

‘ Angels and ministers of grace, defend us,’

were not audible ; but this was certainly not so when he had often acted the part. Later in life the actor was not master of his voice : it became harsh, strident, so strained as not rarely to be unintelligible. But it was not so in 1876 : then it was singularly beautiful in its deep tones, and every whisper, here—and in *Macbeth*, where the dagger speech, I remember, was given almost entirely in a whisper—was heard all over the theatre. Russell thought that Hamlet was shown as hysterical in moments of excitement. Perhaps this was so, but it did not overstep the bounds of nature. And the new suggestions—the use of the tablets at the end of two soliloquies, for example—were real elucidations of the text. And this was true, too, where he did *not* follow the old tradition. In ‘Is it the King ?’ we were told that ‘Charles Kean was, and Sullivan is, great’ ; and Barry Sullivan certainly did make a startling point of the wonder whether at last the revenge he had in vain tried to stir himself up to execute had been achieved by chance. But Irving’s quiet, startled question was better. Nor can one forget, in that scene in the Queen’s closet, the word-painting of the invisible brothers, and how ‘a son kneeling where he said his first prayers, to implore the mother who taught him to lisp them to forsake her sin, is an incident worthy of the greatest poet, and only to be fitly enacted by the greatest of tragic actors.’ Again let me quote Edward Russell : when I remember Irving as I saw him still in his prime—and I think that when he acted the part again, with Ellen Terry, he had improved his rendering in many points—I feel there is no exaggeration in the words : ‘He has made Hamlet much more, and something more ethereal, than a type of feeble doubt, of tragic struggle, or even of fine philosophy. The immortality of his Hamlet is immortal youth, immortal enthusiasm, immortal tenderness, immortal nature.’

Of other Hamlets I will only say that Barry Sullivan's was the actor's Hamlet, and Benson's to some extent the scholar's. I mean that the latter gave us, sometimes, the whole play: how well I remember one hot afternoon and evening in August at Stratford and the cool drive back to Oxford by moonlight, arriving just at midnight, with two brothers, my friends, one of whom lies buried where he fell in France. *Hamlet* really does gain, to the beholder, by being played right through: the short scene after the death of Polonius, and the scene on a plain in Denmark with 'his sea-cloak girt about him,' are not to be left out without loss. So one knew that Benson really had studied the whole *Hamlet*; though one felt, on trust, that Irving also certainly had.

The other parts need careful playing, and at the Lyceum they received it. Miss Isabel Bateman's Ophelia was very noble and very sad, Miss Ellen Terry's very human and appealing. That sturdy old stager, Mr. T. Swinbourne, could play the King or Horatio equally well; and Mr. Forrester (who afterwards made a great original success as Iago) was very markedly good as the former. Osric had two good actors—H. B. Conway and Kyrle Bellew. Mr. T. Mead was, each time, steady and sepulchral as the Ghost, and (alas! I never saw Compton) Sam Johnson made a dear, delightful old gravedigger. Each time, that excellent actress, Miss Pauncefort, was an understanding Queen. There were very good people too in the Bensonians of 1910.

There was hardly more than one opinion about Irving's Hamlet : there were very distinctly two about his Macbeth. Most playgoers liked, and still like, the heavy, not dishonest soldier led into crime by his overpowering wife : the strong-limbed, strong-hearted declaimer who kills a guest as he would an enemy and flinches no more from murder than from single combat. So Hermann Vezin, a very fine actor, who perhaps never quite reached the climax of greatness, rendered him ; so, I think, did Benson ; so assuredly did Robert Atkins. Each was impressive, for if no one can fail as Hamlet, the magnificent poetry of *Macbeth*, in any practised actor's mouth, cannot but carry the listener along in a kind of trance. But, to my mind, Irving gave us something incomparably greater than that. His was an intimate study of a born criminal.

It was he who, before even the witches met him, planned the murder and spoke of it to his wife. So you saw in the look with which he received the greeting of the weird sisters. And all through he was the wicked man, poetic in the way he expressed his thoughts, imaginative, a creature of highly strung nerves, who could fight like a tiger at the last, who had no shrinking from blood, only from the visible consequences of crime, the fear of detection, the sight of what he had done, not the doing it. Imagination showed him the dagger, but he stifled imagination ; supernatural visions showed him the future, but he went unflinchingly forward. Irving, I think, showed all this marvellously. His *Macbeth* was never at rest : in plot, in execution, in accomplishment, in climax of life. Here—when Miss Bateman was a magnificent Lady Macbeth, quite cold, relentless, commanding, only at last mentally breaking down from the very acuteness of the struggle of years to achieve her husband's ambition—he had complete command of his powers, his voice, his gesture, his extraordinarily mobile face. The murder scenes, and the last act, I think, were simply appalling. They made me feel, as I still feel, that *Macbeth* is the greatest of all tragedies. If I were to recall the greatest moments, it would be to think of the end of the murder scene, when the knocking at the door grew louder and louder and Lady Macbeth dragged her husband, as it were by main force, up the long stairs, his eyes glazed with terror, his lips trembling—and then the porter shambling in with an accent which brought us down to earth with a shock ; and again the last moments when the murderer is beaten to his knees, yet fights on after his sword is broken, with terrific energy. In Irving there was a most unusual union of the poet and the man of action : I mean that he could make you feel the beauty of the matchless verse and show you that it was natural in this sensitive savage to feel it. And then he could display the most torrential physical passion with a vigour that was none the less tremendous because, like the poetic sense, it was a thing of the nerves. To my mind Irving never did anything finer than his *Macbeth*, or Mrs. Crowe anything greater than her Lady Macbeth. When in later years, in 1889, he acted the part, I confess I think that his presentation was weakened ; and, though no one is a more devout admirer of hers than I am, I confess also that I think Ellen Terry was completely out of her part. She did not fail : she could never do that. She presented a highly strung, devoted wife, who sacrificed her soul for her husband, who screwed her courage rather than his to the sticking-place : a twentieth-

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century neurotic murderer, not the hard, relentless woman Shakespeare drew. However that may be, the play each time was a superb stage success : the mysterious supernaturalism, the scenery where the Highland moorland mist comes down like a mirage, the barbaric soldiers, the cold, solid, savage life of it all—all made a superb stage picture.

From *Macbeth* to *Othello*. I never saw Irving with Booth, or as Iago. But the sight of him as Othello, one spring afternoon in 1876, is a thing I can never forget. On the whole, I think it was the most absolutely real thing I ever saw, except Sarah Bernhardt's *Phèdre*. The tense atmosphere of the last scene, when death seemed actually to be on the stage ; the absolute silence, without a whisper or a sigh, of the audience ; from the first moment when Othello stood at the back of the stage looking across to his sleeping wife.

‘ It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars !—
It is the cause.’

I can hear still that tone of agonised pathos. And that was the sense all through. Othello was as entirely noble as Macbeth was entirely wicked. Generous, chivalrous, supremely trustful, yet goaded, at his most sensitive point, into a crime which he abhors. Even the fiercest jealousy is not so real in his heart as the unquenchable love.

‘ I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee : no way but this,
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.’

The frightful agony of passion in the third and fourth acts was expressed with a desperate reality by the great actor. I think Othello was one of Irving's greatest parts. And when I saw him the Iago failed him, but the two Bateman sisters were, I think, without fault as Emilia and Desdemona. A great actress can show what a great part Emilia is—and so Mrs. Crowe did—an essential part really, in the tragedy, with something mysterious about it which Shakespeare will only let you guess at, yet the part of an honest woman, loyal, unflinching in her love. In 1878 I saw the Hungarian, Neville Moritz, as Othello. He was striking, but not so completely great as Irving. With him were Miss Henrietta Hodson, a beautiful Desdemona ; Miss Geneviève Ward, a very fine Emilia ; and Hermann Vezin at his very best as Iago—the plain, simple, honest outer man, the very devil within. It was really great acting.

I cannot say the same for *King Lear* as I have seen it. Perhaps it is too tremendous to be acted. I do not think Mr. Norman M'Kinnel came anywhere near it, and, though there were fine pieces in his performance, I think it was beyond the power—it is no discredit to any man to say that—of Frank Benson. No one can forget the supreme beauty of Ellen Terry's Cordelia : it was impossible to see it without tears. And there was a pathetic Fool, something near the hectic, half-witted boy that Macready imagined, by Mr. Haviland. And at the Lyceum there was an exquisite setting : the period chosen was that when the Roman occupation of Britain was over, and the dresses, I think, were designed by Ford Madox Brown—a sort of pre-Raphaelite barbarism, romantic, mysterious, suggestive, bringing Arthurian legends to mind. The scenery was extraordinarily beautiful. How can people, after seeing such loveliness, be content with bare Cube-ish walls which suggest nothing in the world but height ! At the centre of it all was, of course, that savage, shaggy old man, the senile, fierce, yet loving British King. For Irving had an entirely coherent conception of the part—that Lear was, from the first, on the verge of madness, and that, whether in rage or in pathos, he never ceased to be mad, save for scarce a flicker of sanity at the very end, the really heart-breaking moments at the last. But I suppose he was now not equal, physically, to the tremendous strain of the fearful scenes on the heath. There were flashes of greatness ; yet one felt how much more there was which the actor could not let one see. With Benson I think the best acting was Matheson Lang's, very clever, as Edmund, and George Weir's, very pathetic and quite original, as the Fool.

Romeo and Juliet brings sundry memories. Perhaps best of all is the dear, delightful Mrs. Stirling as the Nurse, a little bit too motherly or grandmotherly perhaps—but how could one help being to such a child as Ellen Terry ?—with a thousand touches of genuine human nature, so entirely true and lifelike, so delightfully funny, and so tender. And Ellen Terry, nearer tragedy than ever before in the last act : otherwise a beautiful, tender, loving woman, with a voice that had tears in it as well as love. And Irving's was a very clever Romeo : clever, that was all. But he was so entirely unlike a boy that one could only echo the profane jest, 'O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo ?' A wonderful bit of acting, but not Romeo.

Now Forbes Robertson, if a tiny bit too sentimental, was,

I think, wellnigh as near perfection as could be when he played Romeo with Madame Modjeska. Every one knows the play. It would be useless for me to go through an actor's points ; but what my memory insists on is that Forbes Robertson made Romeo what the poet made him—the most beautiful, the most poetic lover that ever was. It is one of the performances I cherish in my heart as the sands of life run out, because it brings to one's mind all things that are lovely and of good report. And Madame Modjeska, though she had none of the youth and loveliness of Ellen Terry, was a far greater tragic actress. All the tragedy of the part was really great in her hands. And I have seen Adelaide Neilson also as Juliet—most beautiful, and with real power too. And never, never shall I forget her delicious Peter—dear old shambling, fumbling Buckstone, the lamp of life only flickering in him then, but with a quite immortal chuckle in his voice and twinkle in his eye.

When I write so much of past memories I must not forget the present. As I looked through these records there was running, at the Regent Theatre, by King's Cross, a performance which critics (I may suppose quite young critics) acclaim as the perfection of Shakespearean acting. I must not say it is that, though I recognise the zest and enthusiasm of the chief performers. The setting, too, though monotonous, is not unimpressive ; yet the dull blank wall, from the top of which peeps the childlike Juliet, is a feeble contrast to the quivering, wind-blown leafage of the garden at the Lyceum. Miss Gwen Ffrangcon Davies may be proud of the applause she has won from the papers, and, if it has not spoiled her, will certainly do something greater than her Juliet. It is a lovable performance, gentle, timid, rather hysterical—rather superficial, I fear—but pretty and with many nice little touches in it, and very much better in the quiet parts than in the fateful tragic scenes. So, too, is the picturesque Romeo of Mr. John Gielgud. He obviously does like and enjoy the part and throw himself into it and feel himself to be a real Italian lover. But he is very near tearing all the passion to tatters. I must respectfully say that he makes such a noise in the garden (which is not a garden but a street) that he certainly would have awoken the whole Capulet household. One feels, somehow, that hardly any of the actors (though I like much in Mr. Campbell Gullan's Friar Laurence) have really appreciated the poetry, the matchless lyric beauty, of the play. They try to act every word of it, and so the lines are blurred, the witchery departs, and hurry

and over-emphasis are substituted for the melody of Shakespeare's verse. A nice Nurse ; but I can't forget Mrs. Stirling. A sympathetic Juliet, but without the power of Modjeska, or the beauty of Adelaide Neilson, or the charm of Ellen Terry. Indeed, she has—may an old man say ?—the disadvantages, as well as the advantages, of youth.

Then *Cymbeline* : never very popular, somehow, on the stage, but yet most beautiful there. Years and years ago I saw Miss Wallis as Imogen, and very gentle and lovable she was ; and, quite lately, Miss Phyllis Relph too—charming. What has become of her ? And Miss Margaret Halstan, fine in all the strongest scenes. And Mr. H. O. Nicholson, quite deliciously clownish as Cloten ; and Mr. Norman Forbes, very good, too, in that same unsympathetic part ; and the very able Cyril Keightley as Iachimo. Which last brings me back to the Lyceum in 1882. That was the most beautiful performance of the play : the scenery and music ; the whole poetic atmosphere, as it were, the very image of fidelity and unbreakable love that Tennyson dwelt on to the last. And Ellen Terry, so poetic—I think it is the part in which she showed most pure poetry—so thoroughly natural and womanly through it all. In that most beautiful scene on the way to Milford Haven, every line told, with Ben Webster and Gordon Craig beside her. There is no high tragedy in the part—no, but there is poetry in the character even more than in the words ; and that was Ellen Terry.

And so here it comes that I part from Irving, very subtle and sombre, extraordinarily impressive in that one great scene of his, where he comes out from the chest : not one of the great characters which brought out his great powers, but a man that Shakespeare drew and that he, with his devotion to Shakespeare, could realise through and through.

I have left to the last two plays which I have only lately seen. I doubt if I have ever seen Shakespeare with such a sense of novelty. At the 'Old Vic' there is no elaboration of scenery, still less is there the modern fancy of statuesque immovable setting. The scenery is much what one might have seen fifty years ago, and the dresses are quite secondary to the persons who wear them. I am not sure, though, that I am quite right in saying this of *Troilus and Cressida* when I think of Helen as a gorgeously dressed queen who might have made Elizabeth or Mary Stuart envious. Yes, though I abhor the thought of Garrick dressing Macbeth as an officer in the Foot

Guards, and am well aware that in most cases at least the actors of Shakespeare's day dressed all nations and languages and ages as Elizabethan, I cannot be satisfied to see Calchas as a Puritan minister or Patroclus as a minion of Henri III. But the acting of *Troilus and Cressida* seemed to me really excellent. Achilles (Wilfred Walter), Troilus (Ion Swinley), and the quite abominable Pandarus and Cressida (Neil Curtis and Florence Saunders) were all as good as good could be ; perhaps Thersites (D. Hay Petrie) better still ! But really one could not get over the utter incongruity of these elegant Elizabethans, who would have done very well for France and England, pretending to be of Greece and Troy. Shakespeare, with his muddle over Aristotle and Homer, may have known very little about the Trojan War, but yet he does give a marvellous reality to its heroes, and the play contains some of his very finest poetry and most pregnant thought. And, I at least think, much of this is spoilt when you are forced to see the characters as if they were masqueraders at the Court of Queen Elizabeth.

I am thankful that such an experiment was not tried with *Titus Andronicus*. It seems a quite impossible play to act. Not at all. The keenness of the ' Old Victorians ' makes it much more than bearable, quite absorbing, impressive, a real intellectual exercise. Of course the audience did find the accumulated horrors towards the end to tend towards mirth. There was an honest enjoyment in the pie made by her son which Tamora found so appetising. But the horrors were felt too, especially the dreadful mumbling of the tongueless Lavinia. And the play was taken so rapidly, with force and intensity, that no one could feel that it was uninteresting, tedious, artificial, even absurd, as it seems sometimes in the reading. It was the really splendid acting of the ' Vic ' Shakespeare Company which made it seem possible in spite of its horrors—possible as a memory of the dark ages, of conflict between Romans of the decay, Eastern Romans it might well be, and barbarous Goths ; possible most of all because of the magnificent acting of Mr. George Hayes as Aaron the Moor. In the study Aaron seems incredible : on the stage the Satanic ferocity is made alive by the extraordinary power of the actor, quiet, cold, deliberate, restrained, appallingly intense, and without one touch of exaggeration in voice or gesture : a hideous creature made natural and living. For that itself *Titus Andronicus* was worth seeing on the stage. Other actors were good too—Wilfred Walter making the weakness of Titus almost real,

Reyner Barton and John Laurie as the disgusting sons of Tamora, Florence Saunders as the queen herself, D. Hay Petrie giving life and originality in a very few words to the unfortunate Clown, as Buckstone did to Peter or Lionel Brough to the Gardener in *Richard II*. When I read him I confess I am convinced by Mr. J. M. Robertson's disproof of Shakespeare's authorship. When the Old Vic acts the play there are scenes in it when I am forced to cry 'Aut Morus aut diabolus'—Shakespeare or no other playwright that I know. I feel just the opposite over *The Two Noble Kinsmen*: even if the lines here and there deceive you, it will not stand the acting. Perhaps it is the trained Shakespearean actors who put into *Titus Andronicus* some of the true spirit of the greatest genius of the English race.

So one may end on the most doubtful, and the poorest, of all the plays which bear the honoured name. If so flawed a stone sends out such rays of light, if such a toad, ugly and venomous, yet bears a precious jewel in his head, what is the immeasurable value which the great succession of English actors, men and women, living in his works, far surpassing the literary historians and the prosy and pedantic commentators, have given to us, four centuries after William Shakespeare was laid to rest in the chancel of Stratford-on-Avon church? I am sure that the noble tradition of our stage was created by Shakespeare: I am sure that our actors, century by century, are repaying the debt.

Let me end, as old men will, by dropping into plain prose. If I were asked what changes I observe during these fifty years in the way Englishmen act Shakespeare, there are many things I might note. I think most of the changes are changeable still. I do not think there is any finality to be obtained in acting the immortal plays. We have nothing—or very little—like the classic rigidity with which the Théâtre Français plays Molière or Racine or Corneille. English acting has never been stereotyped. There are traditions, but most of them were begun by men of genius and hardly endure beyond two generations of playgoers. We are told of the tremendous meaning which Fechter threw into the words 'Is it the King?' Who knows what the meaning was, to-day? I know, of course, that there are plenty of customs handed down, as to where the actor should enter, how he should laugh, where the joke about shutting the door or tumbling down over the sword comes in; but I have seen them vary with the taste or fancy of the player, and I am certain that they will go on varying still. And

scenery has its fashions even more changeable. When first I saw Shakespeare, a panelled room, a Norman castle with fifteenth-century battlements, a garden with a few portable shrubs, an Italian villa with a balcony, and (as in the egregious *Douglas*)

‘This is the grove, the centre of the wood.
How sad and solemn is the midnight scene,’

were quite enough for the stage manager. Charles Kean had made what I fancy must have been rather a lodging-house attempt at magnificence, if one may judge by the absurd list of authorities he quoted in his editions. I rather think that it was Mr. Chatterton who started the evil tradition of interpolated beauty by showing Cleopatra in her barge that ‘burned upon the water.’ Perhaps not altogether undeservedly did he come to say that ‘Shakespeare spells ruin.’ Sir Herbert Tree was a sad offender in the same line. We were actually shown King John signing Magna Carta—signing it, if you please!—and a quarter of an hour or more was taken up by Henry of Bolingbroke in procession with Richard II as a dejected captive, described once for all, like the barge of Cleopatra, in immortal verse. Then we have the stately cubic Craigising, which frankly I do not understand. Not all Shakespeare’s plays can be played in a classical temple. You may mock at the Victorians, but Irving was a Victorian, and he was quite right in giving you scenery and dresses which helped the imagination yet did not intrude on it, the scenery of Harker and Hawes Craven and Walter Hann and Telbin and other good artists, with Alma Tadema to help you to envisage the Rome of Mantegna and of Coriolanus; the shimmering olives of Juliet’s garden, the long stairway—like that in the abbey of Hexham—in the castle of Macbeth. I think we are approaching an agreed return to such not too elaborate attempts at realism; to go beyond Shakespeare for once, you may see it to-day in the really beautiful setting of *Hassan* when the pilgrims start on the journey to Samarkand.

There are notable changes as to voice and manner, which extend from the prolonged deliberateness of Helen Faucit to the lightning speed of Mr. Bridges-Adams’s companies. Irving often drawled, and latterly, I fear, was often unintelligible; several actors ranted; but only lately has there come the strange fashion of avoiding the letter *s*. Next time you go to the theatre, count how many times it is pronounced correctly and how often it is given as *th*. Mr. Gielgud actually makes Romeo speak of a ‘thick’ man instead of a

sick one. I think the fashion began with Tree, and I venture to believe it to be an odious one. Pronunciation-mannerisms are the worst of all. It goes without saying that the actors should at least be sure of their quantities : they should not say (as I have heard them say) Artēmis and Mo-nack-um.

And so I end. When I was a little boy I used to ask myself, as children will, what author I would take with me, if I were allowed only one, to a desert island, and I always answered 'Shakespeare.' So I should still. Only now I have the memory of great actors to enrich and vivify my poor understandings and my halting thought.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since the two earlier articles have appeared, and some indulgent critics have written to me, the editor has very kindly allowed me to add a few words to this, the last.

In my first article (November) I most stupidly gave two spellings in the name of that most excellent actor, the late W. H. Stephens. It was he of whom I remember the excellence as Adam and as Dogberry. And in the same article the last paragraph was incompletely corrected for the press. What Wilson Barrett said was 'a little more than kin, and less than kind,' the quantity of the last 'i' being short. I never understood what he meant by it, and whatever he meant, surely the alteration of pronunciation was a mistake.

And again, the new reading suggested in the last act of *Macbeth* depends upon the punctuation. Some would read :

Hang up our banners on the outward walls.
The cry is still. They come.

This is to mean, I suppose, that the approach of the enemy is made, as they draw near, in silence. The distant noise, which warned the garrison, has been hushed as the foes draw nigh.

In my second article (December) I see that the initial J. from the name of the excellent J. H. Barnes has slipped out.

W. H. H.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is opened first.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 23.

(*The Third of the Series.*)

'I vas a carrier's boy at startin': then a vagginer's, then a helper, then a boots. Now I'm a gen'l'm'n's servant.'

1. 'He was buttoned up mighty trim and tight, and must have taken a great deal of pains with his whiskers, which were accurately curled.'
2. 'The cry is taken up by a hundred voices, and the crowd —— at every turning.'
3. '—— gooseberries (very sour ones too) were common at untimely seasons, and from mere sprouts of bushes.'
4. 'Who should follow us down the road from the coach, my dear, but a poor person in a very —— bonnet.'
5. 'Marriage is a civil contract; people marry to better their worldly condition and improve appearances; it is an affair of house and furniture, of liveries, servants, ——, and so forth.'

6. 'There's not such a view in England as the view out of my window ; I've seen it every morning before I shaved, and I ought to know something about it.'

Acrostic No. 23 is taken entirely from Dickens.

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed above 'Book Notes' on a later page.
4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back.
5. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
6. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
7. Answers to Acrostic No. 23 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than January 20.

ANSWER TO NO. 22.

1. R	ut	H
2. O	thell	O
3. A	rro	W
4. R	ai	L
5. E	rmin	E
6. D	ee	D

PROEM : Coleridge, *The Ancient Mariner*
part 1.

LIGHTS :

1. Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale*.
2. Shakespeare, *Othello*, i. 3.
3. Longfellow, *The Arrow and the Song*.
4. Tennyson, *Maud*, part 3.
5. R. Browning, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, iii.
6. Cowper, *Truth*.

Acrostic No. 21 ('Sands Hands') : Correct answers were received from 207 solvers, and partly correct ones from 49, and there were 9 answers that did not observe the rules. The chief difficulties were 'Arethusa' and 'Sextus.'

The first correct answer opened came from 'Jean,' who takes the monthly prize. Mrs. F. Walter Frost, Sunnydale, Swanage, Dorset, is entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

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